

MISSION  
TO NORTH  
AMERICA

Presbyterian Church in America

# Multiply

*Profiling God's Great Work in North America*

**Dear Friends:**

Did you know that North America is considered by many in evangelical circles as the third largest mission field in the world? This fact is confirmed in the changing look of the population, as well as the increasingly post-Christian mindset of the leaders and media in the United States and Canada. The need for Gospel ministry in North America has never been greater.

With a population of nine million in the metro area, Chicago is ranked as the third most populous metro area in the US. The culture and demographics are typical of any big city: many different ethnic people groups, all levels of socioeconomic status, and a variety of religious and spiritual beliefs. While many residents have some background in the church, their awareness of God's grace is low. Seeking to restore the meaning of the Gospel to the metro area, with a special focus within Chicago's city limits, is a group of men with a deep passion for this great city. Their efforts are featured in this issue of *Multiply*.

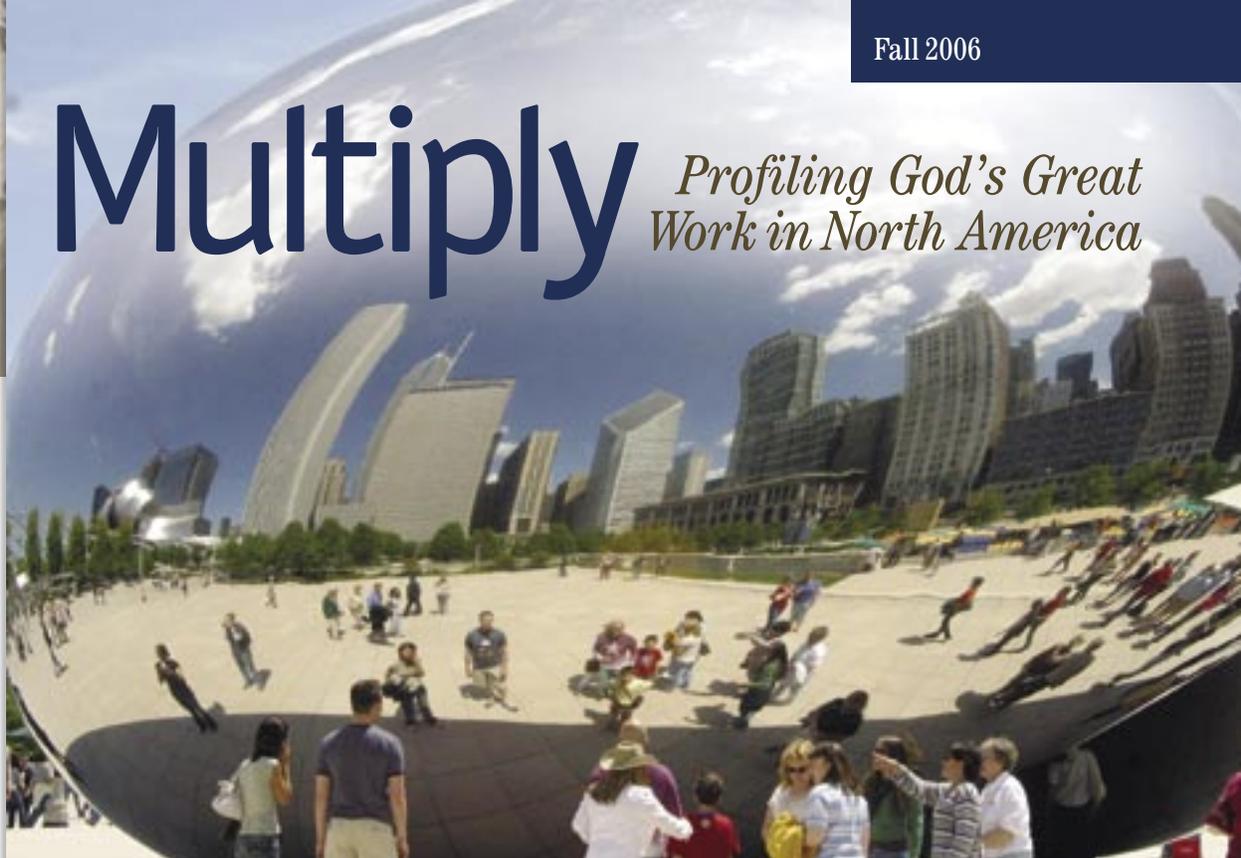
Currently, there are seven Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) church plants and mission churches in the recently formed Chicago Metro Presbytery. A Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) is underway on the campus of Northwestern University. The PCA ministry in Chicago is enlarging, and Mission to North America (MNA) is committed to serving this presbytery for future growth.

In addition to church planting, MNA supports the PCA in North America by coordinating English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministries, Mercy Ministries, Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP), Revitalization and Evangelism, Capitol Service, Chaplain Ministries, and MNA ShortTerm and Disaster Response. Please continue to be faithful in prayer and financial support, asking God to further His Kingdom through this work.

In Christ,



Jim Bland, MNA Coordinator



## PCA Church Planters Speak of God's Grace in the Windy City

Ask any sports fan how the city of Chicago is divided and you will get an answer that is almost universal among Chicago residents – the city is divided by a historic baseball rivalry, the Cubs on the north side and the White Sox on the south side. The divide is clear and considerable. But ask the same question of a church planter in the Chicago area, and the answer is not so simple.

To say Chicago is a diverse city is a gross understatement. **More than 150 people groups are represented in the metropolitan area.** Several of Chicago's suburbs are home to some of the wealthiest business figures in the country. In other neighborhoods, many families are living significantly below the poverty line.

Phil Haltom, church planter of Trinity Presbyterian, reports that the Chicago metropolitan area is divided into 89 "villages." These villages are clearly defined by the people who live there; one people group equals, in most cases, one neighborhood. For Gospel ministry, this translates into many distinct mission fields within one region.

Hector Mardy, a native of Haiti, moved to Rogers Park on the far north side of Chicago to plant New Hope Haitian. He estimates the Haitian population in the metro city at 70,000, with at least 20,000 in his own community. "Rogers Park is considered the Haitian center of the city," says MNA Church Planting Coordinator and Midwest

Regional Director Ted Powers, who lives in Chicago. "It's what they call a gateway community for immigrants. They move here from their native countries and eventually move out into other areas of the city. Thus, the reach of our ministry is far and wide."

*(Continued)*

**Above: Millennium Park's Cloud Gate reflects the skyline of Chicago, a city that exemplifies the changing population in North America. Its growing diversity makes Chicago a place of great opportunity for Gospel ministry.**

**Right: Ted Powers describes the battle between good and evil in the community surrounding New Hope Haitian as "dramatic and overt." Voodooism, which is rampant in Haiti, has immigrated into North America along with Haitians. "We thought that many people would leave voodoo in Haiti, but they haven't. Haitian church members have had curses placed upon them, and some Haitian landlords have evicted anyone associated with the church." But Hector Mardy, far left, and his congregation are not deterred. They know the Lord is at work and have witnessed many neighbors coming to Christ.**





In the fall of last year, Jason Harris started the first Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) in Illinois at Northwestern University. He lists figuring out how to incarnate the Gospel on Northwestern's campus as the biggest challenge: "Our hope is that we will be able to engage both believers and skeptics through a fresh encounter with Jesus and that the University itself will subsequently be renewed and transformed." Jason and his wife, Ashley, assess the first year as better than expected. "Overall it has been a good year. It's been exciting to see how God is building a Gospel-shaped community."

Bob Reid says that the congregation at Grace Chicago, which averages a worship attendance of 80 each week, is composed of people from all different spiritual backgrounds. "We're drawing people who never ever wanted to go to church. We are trying to present the Gospel in a way that people will hear it afresh. Authenticity is what they appreciate."

On the west side of the city, there is a vastly different picture. Phil began planting Trinity about two years ago in Hinsdale, a western suburb of Chicago. The defining characteristic of Hinsdale is the socio-economic level of its mostly Anglo population. "This area is very affluent," Phil says. "Hinsdale's residents are executives in Fortune 500 companies. They are individuals who started their careers living downtown but moved to the suburbs when they started families."

The wealth of the neighborhood, Phil believes, is at the core of the spiritual atmosphere among the people. "Individuals here think along the mentality that they've 'arrived.' ***They are very successful in what they do, in business terms. They are used to trying to overcome the world by themselves. It's hard for them to admit their need for grace.***"

The community around Grace Presbyterian in Winnetka, Illinois, a northern suburb, is similar. Church Planter Bill James says that the area is wealthy and highly educated. "We have a large number of individuals with advanced degrees, very successful in business. Many residents are in top management of corporations or have their own companies. It's definitely a community with high levels of influence."

Closer to the city center, in Wicker Park, is Grace Chicago, a mission church Bob Reid started four years ago. Bob says this neighborhood is where the young professionals live. "Our demographic is so dynamic. These individuals are just finishing graduate school and beginning their careers. They have few responsibilities that keep them home. Because of that, on any given Sunday, 25 percent of our congregation is absent due to travel or work."



Weldon Williams is pastor of Triumph Community, a predominantly African American congregation, in the Chicago suburb of Bolingbrook. "Our ministry is not so much about the geography, but more focused on the racial demographic. With about 70 people in attendance each week, many families come from surrounding communities to fellowship in a familiar culture."

***Bob first thought that the age of most of the church members would present a challenge, and while he says there are related difficulties, it's also the most exciting part. "Because they are so young and early in their careers, we can work with them on how to face everything they do in life, now and in the future, in light of the Gospel."***

At Cityview, in the heart of the West Loop, the age range in the church mirrors Grace Chicago – young singles and couples. But unlike Grace Chicago, where worshipers are mostly Anglo, the majority of the people at Cityview are second generation Asian American. Peter Kim, a Korean American, planted the church in 2002. He states that many of the people in his neighborhood have had some exposure to religion while growing up. ***"There are those who have some background in Christianity because it was passed down to them from their families. Now, as adults making their own choices, they don't see the relevancy of the Gospel for their lives."***



In an environment in which the Christian faith is often not well known, Phil Haltom affirms, "As hard as Gospel ministry is here, it's that good – seeing people coming to Christ, Christ working deep in their hearts, and then, those people serving in the community in His name." Left to right: Ted Powers, Jason and Ashley Harris, and Phil and Allison Haltom.



Seesun Yoo encounters the same mindset at Bethel Christian on the north side of Chicago, “It’s not spiritually barren per se, but the religious aspects that are here are more cultural.” Another component of the community Seesun sees greatly affecting the residents’ spiritual lives is the income level. “Most of the people are middle to lower-middle class, working blue-collar jobs – many in very desperate situations. When they aren’t able to handle the daily stressors in their lives, it reflects in their church attendance.” But he adds, ***“The most fulfilling thing is when we witness the people with hard lives finding Christ. They are still working through the struggles, but now they are doing it with Him.”***



About 125 people attend worship services at Grace Presbyterian each week. Bill James says, “It’s incredible to see the Lord bring something into existence that didn’t formerly exist. This is God’s work.” From left, Bill, Mark O’Connor, Rick Vitek, Jonathan Gilley, and Josh Moshier.

Three years ago, Bethel Assistant Pastor Brad Beier began planting Bethel UC, a mission church on the edge of the University of Chicago campus. “We started with five students. Within one month, we had about 40 people, and now attendance averages at around 50. Although we have both students and community residents in our church, overall, there is a serious disconnect between the university and the community. The community feels the college has left them behind.”

Bethel UC wants to be a part of helping bridge this gap, and this goal is echoed among all the church planters in Chicago. ***“Chicago is a city where the world is right in view, but divided,”*** says Phil Haltom. ***“Our challenge is to break down these divisions, both between communities and within communities, with the love of the Gospel.”*** Ted Powers sums it up: “Chicago is huge, diverse, growing, and influential. It’s a business and cultural hub. It’s where the PCA needs to go.”

An important step in accomplishing this goal is to truly become a part of the communities. “When people try to come in and minister to these neighborhoods without actually being a part of the neighborhood, it doesn’t work. They tend to overlook the community,” relates Arlin Troyer, assistant pastor at Cityview. “This has happened too often, and now there is a built-up suspicion of outsiders in many neighborhoods.”



Fostering a united city, Arlin and several of the other pastors are working with established community para-church ministries to address the needs of the people. The Bridge (a daughter ministry of Mission: USA) is an outreach to individuals living a street lifestyle and individuals with a history of incarceration. Every week, Ministry President Glen Fitzjerrell invites pastors from neighboring churches to preach at the Bridge’s worship service, ***“Our goal is to connect the people with a local church.”*** Our worship services give those attending a feel for the pastor’s preaching style, and then, after the service, the pastors and people have the opportunity to fellowship and ask questions. Put simply, we’re the ultimate resource for church planters. We’re a ministry that encourages other ministries to take people from us.”



On the south side of the city, Sunshine Gospel Ministries reaches out to inner-city communities through Gospel ministry, educational and vocational support, and

Far left: The congregation at Bethel Christian is one of the more ethnically diverse of the churches. Around 60 percent of the people are Hispanic, with the rest mostly Asian and Anglo. “It’s definitely unique to have a multi-ethnic church with a Korean pastor,” asserts Seesun Yoo (pictured top center). Also pictured are Brad and Shannon Beier, far left.



Part of meeting the needs of such diverse neighborhoods is developing leadership from within. MNA Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP), led denominationally by Brian Kelso, equips churches and presbyteries to mentor and train leaders for ministry. Facilitating LAMP in Chicago, Arlin Troyer is helping individuals cultivate their gifts to be effective leaders in their neighborhoods: “There are certain areas in Chicago that I can’t reach in the same way as someone from a different ethnic background. LAMP allows individuals who may not have pursued traditional seminary to receive the training they need.” From left, Kathy and Arlin Troyer, Peter Kim, and LAMP trainee Matthew Milam.

Far left: The congregation at Bethel Christian is one of the more ethnically diverse of the churches. Around 60 percent of the people are Hispanic, with the rest mostly Asian and Anglo. “It’s definitely unique to have a multi-ethnic church with a Korean pastor,” asserts Seesun Yoo (pictured top center). Also pictured are Brad and Shannon Beier, far left.

(Continued)



With more than 100 years of serving Chicago, Sunshine Gospel Ministries places importance on becoming a part of the communities in which they work. Joel Hamernick explains, "All of the staff live in the neighborhoods and all of our offices are here too. We are the community." Joel (center) talks with Sunshine key leaders Zack Strother (left, with daughter Zeta) and Brandon Savage (right).

technology classes. The program also coordinates various activities for the youth, including after school programs, tutoring, Bible studies and discipleship, and leadership development. Sunshine Director Joel Hamernick emphasizes the importance of partnering with local churches: "The urban poor are dealing with serious physical, economic, and spiritual concerns. With churches working together, we are in a better position to handle the issues without bogging down one church. We can build wider bridges – across denominations."

With more than 20 years of Gospel ministry experience in the Chicago area, Ted Powers is eager to see this important and difficult work continue, ***"To answer the Great Commission, you no longer have to go to another country, learn a new language, and grow accustomed to new food. The nations of the world are right here."*** ■



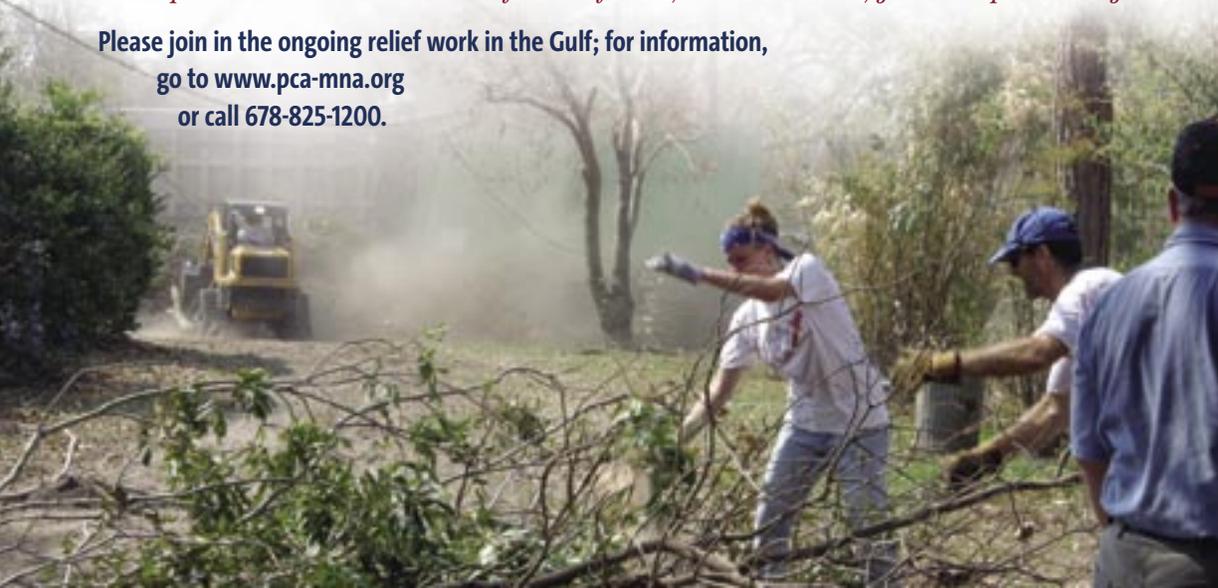
A key message communicated by the Bridge Ministry: "You are wanted." Glen Fitzjerrell (pictured far left with a Bridge attendee, center, and Program Director Mike Gonzalez) says that people coming out of prison don't feel comfortable just going into a church. "They think they aren't wanted, and our goal is to dispel that before they sit down."

## MNA DISASTER RESPONSE:

### "The Long Haul"

*In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of PCA members responded to God's call to serve in the Gulf communities. Praise God for this great outpouring of love for His people and for the advancement of the Gospel. MNA coordinates the ongoing relief effort for our churches and presbyteries. Please continue – over the long haul – the work that has begun in the Gulf region, and join with MNA in preparing for the disasters that are yet to come in North America. To order "The Long Haul," the MNA report on Hurricane Katrina relief in DVD format, or to download it, go to [www.pca-mna.org](http://www.pca-mna.org).*

Please join in the ongoing relief work in the Gulf; for information, go to [www.pca-mna.org](http://www.pca-mna.org) or call 678-825-1200.



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) National Conference** is Sept. 27-Oct. 1, in Philadelphia, Pa., at the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown.

A Korean Language **From Embers to a Flame Conference** is scheduled for Oct. 2-5 in Los Angeles, Ca.

The **Hispanic American Ministries Convocation** will be Oct. 19-20 at New City Fellowship in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Back Creek Presbyterian Church (ARP) in Charlotte, N.C., will host the **From Embers to a Flame Conference** on Nov. 2-4.

This year's **Evangelism Convocation**, "Effective Evangelism in the 21st Century," is Nov. 6-8, at Spanish River Church in Boca Raton, Fla.

On Nov. 9-11, Park Cities Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Tex., will host the **MNA English as a Second Language (ESL) Conference**.

Mark your calendars for next year's **MNA/CEP Mercy Ministries Conference** on Apr. 19-21, 2007, in Atlanta, Ga. Visit [www.pca-mna.org](http://www.pca-mna.org).

**Mission to North America (MNA)** serves the churches and presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), providing leadership in church planting initiatives, as well as placement and training services for church planters in the US and Canada. In addition, MNA coordinates English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministries, Mercy Ministries, Leadership and Ministry Preparation (LAMP), Revitalization and Evangelism, Capitol Service, Chaplain Ministries, and MNA ShortTerm and Disaster Response for the PCA in North America.

For a list of MNA staff, visit our Web site: [www.pca-mna.org](http://www.pca-mna.org).

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