

Passing the Baton

by Daniel Goering, Cologne, Germany

The New Testament uses the image of sports competition to describe the Christian life. It refers to boxing, competing in the games, and running in such a way as to win (1 Corinthians 9). In Acts 13:25 we read about John the Baptist "finishing his course;" and again, in Acts 20:24 and 2 Timothy 4:7, it is recorded that Paul had run his course, or "finished the race." A relay race, where runners have to pass a baton on to a teammate, is an apt illustration for each of us.



Daniel and Lori Goering

Baton passing is a difficult thing. Not only must one successfully hand off the baton to the teammate in front of you without dropping it, but also while your teammate's eyes are looking forward (so that they can stay in their lane), and while running at full speed, and all this must be done within a fairly short distance. So it is with us. We also have only a limited time frame to pass along the treasure which God has entrusted to us (2 Tim. 1:14), and to do it in a way that they in turn can do the same (2 Tim. 2:2).

This is just another way of describing the task of making disciples. The Great Commission is all about passing on to others all that Jesus taught, and doing it in such a way that they practice it and in turn pass it along to others. This is the heart of GCE: making disciples, planting churches, reaching Europe.

In this Euro Update we will show you some real-life examples of this happening in our midst. Having indigenous disciple makers is critical for reaching Europe, and it is especially exciting that all of these articles are written by European nationals. May their stories encourage you to also be passing the baton and making disciples, who will make disciples.

Training Workers for Holland's Harvest

by Steven Wiegman, Amsterdam, the Netherlands



Edwin, Jack and Steven

I heard Jack Stockdale speak at the Awaken conference in Spain, and even more than hearing the words, I got to see his message in action. Being a former drug dealer and pimp, my life has changed in many ways after accepting Christ almost four years ago, and God is still renewing my mind.

For one session, my friend Edwin and I attended a workshop given by Jack and his lovely family. Afterwards, as we were sharing a meal together, Jack found out that Edwin did not understand the gospel fully and that he had not yet put his faith in Christ. Later, Jack and I talked about making disciples, and he invited me to be with him as he shared the gospel with

Edwin. I had been reading the Bible with Edwin every weekday for months, but finally everything started to come together. As I watched, Jack sketched out the Bridge Diagram for Edwin, which led to a good discussion with the three of us. What a thrill it was to see Edwin understand and respond by putting his faith in Christ! At the end of the conference, Edwin stood up on stage to acknowledge that he had accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Now, back in Amsterdam, Edwin and I are in a life group together, and we hold each other accountable. Edwin is currently considering baptism, and it is great to grow as disciples together. I watched a video of Jack and his wife, Joan, in Poland and saw how much they are focused on personal relationships and their desire for God to raise up harvesters. It is truly about surrendering the self, and I praise Jesus for great people like them and making it possible for all of us.

Wake Me Up!

by Alessandro Salute, Torino, Italy

July, hot and humid air clinging to your skin...A determined look, a familiar and dear voice...the voice of a friend and mentor. "Will you serve for the next Awaken?" It took me a while to realize it wasn't a joke. Awaken? Why me, the same person who invented the most imaginative excuses to avoid the previous conference? Why did Anthony want me at his side? He is not the kind of man who needs my help with this event! What was God trying to tell me?

(continued on next page)

Running to Win in Germany

by Martin Bonnet, Cologne, Germany

Almost 20 years ago, a handful of people began to share a vision of a church planting work in Dortmund, Germany. The original vision was “a growing, multiplying church which makes totally committed disciples, and which reaches Dortmund, the Ruhr region, all of Germany and influences the rest of Europe.”

As this initiative was getting started, I was experiencing a major crisis of faith. In having moved to university, I lost contact with my home church and developed some new “friends.” I had wandered further and further away from Jesus. After meeting these people, I experienced for the first time Christians who really tried to live out God’s Word. It gave me new motivation to work again on my relationship with my Lord and, eventually, to put my WHOLE life under His control.

As I continued to grow, I found myself with more and more responsibility in the student fellowship and in the church. Four years later, we started the student work at the University of Bochum and three years after that at the University of Dusseldorf.

At that time I was one of four brothers appointed as elders. After finishing my Ph.D., I got a job offer near Cologne. Since all the leaders saw this as a potential starting point for another church plant, I accepted this job. Over the years, God gradually put a team together for a church plant in Cologne. In the meantime, I have become a professor at the University of Cologne, and therefore can work even closer with our target group of students.



Daniel and Martin

How exciting that God now works through me in the lives of young students, as He had once worked in me through the team back in Dortmund. My desire is to pass this “baton” on to others, so that many more churches can be planted all across Europe.

The Joy of Laying Down Your Life

by Maksim Nikolaev, Kyiv, Ukraine

Several years ago, I developed a friendship with Timmy Powers, one of the GCE team. He helped me learn about more simply reaching people and making disciples in the harvest. I learned about finding a “man of peace”- a person of openness and influence who could be a key to reaching others.

God led me to Volare, an infamous hooligan and drug addict. After he gave his life to Christ, we started reaching his alcoholic and drug-using buddies. A number of them gave their lives to Christ, but trouble soon hit. Volare’s mom died and he started drinking again. A few months in a Christian rehab center set Volare free and helped him to greatly mature in his faith. When he left the center, he wanted to pass along to his struggling friends what he had experienced.

With little expertise and little resources, Volare and I started our first rehab center. Our goal was to bring his friends and other alcoholics and addicts into the center to be introduced to the love of Christ and by His power to be set free. Not only have close to twenty-five addicts come to Christ, it has also spread to their families. Moms and dads, sisters and brothers are being impacted by the revolutionary changes they see in the



Wake Me Up! (continued)

In one word: “grow.” I had to take responsibility, get involved, and be guided by God to understand that my life has no value unless it is spent in serving.



Anthony, Alessandro and Timmy

Obey, set time aside, meet deadlines... In September the adventure begins halfway across Europe, crossing borders via Skype and email. As Timmy Powers advises us, we launch in brainstormings, planning, and organizing. Prayer, concentration, fun, learning... Here’s the key: two men dedicated and faithful, with a deep desire to serve and emulate Jesus. They listened, asked for my thoughts and advice, correcting and encouraging me, so that through team work we could find victory. Everything was about serving and glorifying Jesus, growing together, and learning from each other. We were a team even when components of the conference followed different paths than we expected...but the Holy Spirit was the one who drove, reminding us that the success of Awaken was not dependent on us. At the conference, Jesus was softening hard hearts or warming up those already dedicated to Him. God moved everything, making even what was “outside the program, an error” to the glory and honor of our Lord. As my head hit the pillow, exhausted and spent, I realized that this was the best thing that could have happened, for in my eyes were the faces of men and women, precious, praising the name of Jesus.

lives of their loved ones, and many of them are coming to Christ as well.

I have never had more joy than that which I am experiencing as I lay down my life for these broken, scarred and hurting alcoholics and addicts. Before I dreamed of ministry success for my own selfish desires; now I am really learning the truth of Jesus’ words: *Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24*