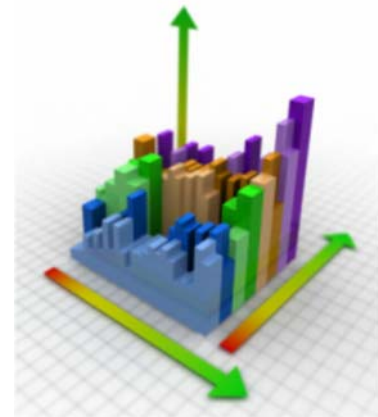


# Maybe We Need a New Way of Counting?

## **CGGC eNews—Vol. 9, No. 46**

November 13, 2015

We have lots of ways of counting in ministry. Earlier today I read an article that referred to the ABC's of counting in the church: Attendance, Buildings, and Cash. While all of these have their place, I can't help but wonder if there is a better way to count. We tend to focus on the numbers we gather (worship attendance), but is that the best way of counting? We typically assume that if worship attendance is up, that's a good sign (who doesn't like preaching to a full room?) and if worship attendance is down, that's a bad sign. Is it really a good thing when our congregation grows because of unresolved conflict or dysfunction at the congregation down the road? What about when a community changes drastically? The main employer shuts down and half the town's population is forced to relocate to find work; this certainly impacts a local faith community and doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the quality of ministry being offered.



What if we started counting a different way? What if we started to count how many folks were sent out of our fellowship for the purpose of serving Jesus and his kingdom? What if we got just as excited about releasing folks to ministry elsewhere as we did about hitting attendance goals or records? It seems like this sending business is something that Jesus cared about. Check out Luke 9 and 10 and notice that he sent out the twelve and then later sent out 72 followers to do the work of his kingdom.



Pastor Terry Steinhauer



Pastor Kevin King

I had the honor of preaching at the Hopewell Church of God a couple of weeks ago. Pastor Terry Steinhauer has served this rural congregation for the past 14 years. One of the things I complimented the congregation on was their willingness to be a sending body. Pastor Kevin King who serves the Ney Church of God is a son of the church. Recently the church has sent two families to serve new works with Pastor Melanie Martin (and husband Sean) serving the Vanlue Community Church and Pastor Chuck Hall (and wife Julie) planting The Reflection Ministries in nearby Bettsville, OH. In addition to this, the church sent a short-term mission team to the Southwest this past summer to partner with our congregations in Gamarco and Hooghan Nizhoni. May their tribe increase!



Pastor Melanie Martin at the Vanlue Community Church

When was the last time your local congregation sent someone to serve the kingdom of God beyond the scope of your local ministry? When was the last time your fellowship gathered and prayed that God would raise up men and women to be sent to serve His kingdom agenda in places near and far? When was the last time the congregation intentionally sent one of your best and brightest to serve and bless another congregation or ministry?

God is in the business of sending his people to pursue his kingdom agenda and I believe one of the most important things we can count is the number of folks being sent to serve God wherever he may call (but often away from our own fellowship). I'm grateful for congregations like Wharton, Leadwood, Shippensburg and Caring Community that have had long legacies of sending their men and women to serve Jesus throughout the world. I'm grateful for congregations like New Providence and High View who have sent their own to help start new works (New Providence in starting High View and a new campus in Lampeter and both congregations in establishing Living Faith).



Would you join me in praying that God would begin to call men and women from among us to go and serve in places where He is already at work? Perhaps this coming year would be the year that your worship attendance dropped because you sent out several families to establish a new work in a nearby community. May this coming year be one where your congregation begins to respond in obedience to Jesus and send brothers and sisters to places near and far to serve His kingdom agenda.