

## Fellowship Council Highlights

The Fellowship Council of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches met January 21-25 in Seal Beach California. Meetings began Wednesday evening, January 21 for dinner followed by a time for update and prayer.

On Thursday, January 22, the council met to talk about the *Commitment to Common Ministry* document that was drafted at the 2008 Charis conference in Bad Homburg, Germany. The following significant facts were noted:

- The first *Charis* conference was held in 1996 in Toronto, Canada. The second *Charis* conference was held in Argentina in 1999. Regional *Charis* gatherings happened between 1999 and 2008. The 2008 *Charis* conference was held August 2008 in Bad Homburg.
- The FGBC was represented by Bob Combs, Bob Wagner, and Steve Kern. Keith Shearer represented the FGBC on the Charis conference planning committee. All of these men served at their own (or their churches) expense
- The *Commitment to Common Ministry* document was a multi-national document. Sections were originally composed in English, French and Spanish.
- The *Commitment to Common Ministry* contains three sections: Church Planting, Leadership Training, and Integrated Ministries. A copy of the *Commitment to Common Ministry* can be downloaded at <http://www.fgbc.org/fc/documents/CommitmentToCommonMinistry-Charis09.pdf> .
- Executives of National Ministries have met three times to talk about their support for the *Commitment to Common Ministry*. The boards of all FGBC National Ministries have endorsed the document and are discussing its implications.

The Fellowship Council took the following action in response to the *Commitment to Common Ministry*: To affirm the CHARIS *Commitment to Common Mission* and encourage participation of the local churches of the FGBC.

The council discussed ways to focus resources and opportunities for the next decade more effectively on multiplication, leadership development and integrated ministries. Resources and opportunities discussed included:

- The job description of a future moderator and possible names for the next FGBC moderator.
- Theme for focus retreats and the theme and schedule for the 2010 conference.
- Opportunities to engage local pastors, churches and districts over the next two years in writing the “future story” of the FGBC as it relates to the *Commitment to Common Ministry*.
- Funding needs and opportunities.

The council met with executives of the National Ministries to on Friday, January 23 to review reports from each ministry and to continue discussion about the *Commitment to Common Ministry*. In the afternoon National Ministry leaders met together to talk about a joint project to support the *Commitment to Common Ministry* recommendations. Fellowship Council commissions also met to take care of regular administrative tasks including financial reports, the 2009 detailed budget, committee assignments, new church applications and new applications for cooperating ministry status.

Two new churches are being recommended for membership in the FGBC: Soma Community Church in Springfield, Ohio and ClearView Church of New Albany, Ohio. Three new Cooperating Ministries are being recommended for approval: GBCCanada USA, Integrated Community Development International, and Grace in Action.

The council praises God for his hand in our fellowship of churches over recent years and looks to the upcoming decade with great expectation.

