

G²G CHURCHES

helping Good Churches become Great Churches

A process guide
for churches,
conferences & district
superintendents



Office of Congregational Development

New England Conference of the United Methodist Church

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I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet! Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it.

Philippians 3:12-16 – The Message

What is a G²G church?

To begin with, it is a very good church. Its ministries are growing in participation and impact. Its leaders are thoughtful and committed. Its worship is inspiring. Its spirit is strong and faithful. It's growing disciples, changing lives, spreading justice, proclaiming grace, and sharing love. It's a good church, but its leaders know that it can be a better church. Its leaders believe that with God's help, it can be a great church.

Good churches have powerful ministries and missions that make a profound difference for the work of Christ in the world, but great churches are something special. Great churches are those pivotal congregations where transformative leadership, radical innovation, deep faithfulness, and disciplined action meet. Great churches produce miraculous fruit for the Kingdom. They are the churches that begin hospitals, universities, advocacy groups, or new churches. They are the churches that develop new and innovate ways of being in ministry with new people in a rapidly changing culture. They are the churches that produce whole generations of leaders that serve Christ in thousands of ways throughout their lives in all kinds of churches and ministries. They are the churches that change hundreds of lives everyday in their local community and through their connections around the globe. They are the churches that other church leaders visit for inspiration, ideas and hope.

In our New England Conference, we are in need of some great churches. We have some good churches, but we have not supported or resourced these churches to realize their God-given potential of becoming truly great. The G²G process is an effort to raise up great churches in New England through intentional partnership between local and denominational church leaders.

What is the G²G process?

The G²G process relies heavily on the work of business researcher and author Jim Collins. In his book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Other's Don't* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001) he outlines a process to guide good organizations become great organizations. He provides significant insight for church leaders in his accompanying monograph *Why Business Thinking is Not the Answer: Good to Great and the Social Sectors* (Jim Collins: 2005). The best summary of his ideas, resources for using them, new research and multi-media files featuring Good to Great concepts can be found on his excellent web site www.jimcollins.com.

In all of his work, he outlines four stages process for building greatness in organizations (from *Good to Great Diagnostic Tool* on www.jimcollins.com):

STAGE 1: DISCIPLINED PEOPLE

Level 5 Leadership. Level 5 leaders are ambitious first and foremost for the cause, the organization, the work—not themselves—and they have the fierce resolve to do whatever it takes to make good on that ambition. A level 5 leader displays a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will.

First Who...Then What. Those who build great organizations make sure they have the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the key seats before they figure out where to drive the bus. They always think first about “who” and then about what.

STAGE 2: DISCIPLINED THOUGHT

Confront the Brutal Facts—the Stockdale Paradox. Retain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties. AND AT THE SAME TIME have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.

The Hedgehog Concept. Greatness comes about by a series of good decisions consistent with a simple, coherent concept—a “Hedgehog Concept.” The Hedgehog concept is an operating model that reflects understanding of three intersecting circles: what you can be the best in the world at, what you are deeply passionate about, and what best drives your economic or resource engine.

STAGE 3: DISCIPLINED ACTION

Culture of Discipline. Disciplined people who engage in disciplined thought and who take disciplined action—operating within a framework of responsibilities—this is the cornerstone of a culture that creates greatness. In a culture of discipline, people do not have “jobs;” they have responsibilities.

The Flywheel. In building greatness, there is no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, the process resembles relentlessly pushing a giant heavy flywheel in one direction, turn upon turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond.

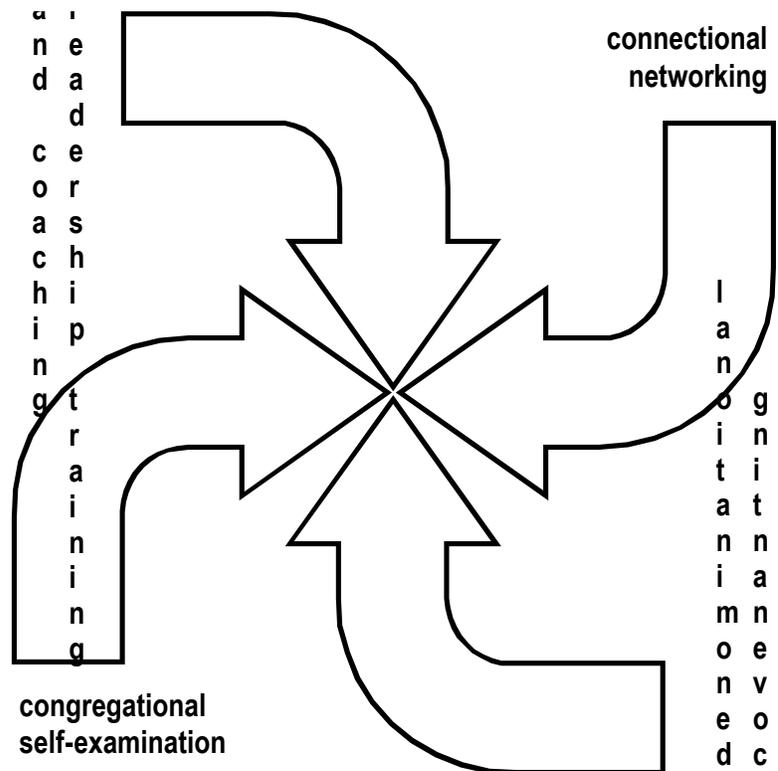
STAGE 4: BUILDING GREATNESS TO LAST

Clock Building, Not Time Telling. Build an organization that can adapt through multiple generations of leaders; the exact opposite of being built around a single great leader, great idea or specific program. Build catalytic mechanism to stimulate progress, rather than acting as a charismatic force of personality to drive progress.

Preserve the Core and Stimulate Progress. Adherence to core values combined with a willingness to challenge and change everything except those core values—keeping clear the distinction between “what we stand for” (which should never change) and “how we do things” (which should never stop changing). Great organizations have a purpose—a reason for being—that goes far beyond just making money, and they translate this purpose into BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals) to stimulate progress.

The G²G process is a way to walk alongside a good congregation and support them as they make decisions to follow God's guidance into become a great congregation. The process itself involves four intersecting sources of support.

1. congregational self-examination
2. leadership training and coaching
3. connectional networking
4. denominational covenanting



Jesus said, "You've observed how godless rulers throw their weight around, how quickly a little power goes to their heads. It's not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for the many who are held hostage."

Matthew 20:25-28 – The Message

Who's involved with G²G churches?

- **Bishop** – Bishop Peter Weaver is directly involved in supporting G²G churches. He is committed to putting the best leaders and resources into the hands of these strategic churches.
- **Cabinet** – Working with the Bishop, the Cabinet enters into a covenant with a G²G to fix and maintain an excellent pastoral appointment throughout the church's involvement in the G²G process, usually 5 years.
- **District Superintendent** – Each DS will work directly with each G²G church.
- **Director of Congregational Development** – The Office of Congregational Development, under its director Curtis Brown, will oversee the G²G program and coordinate support, training and resources. Each G²G church will have direct access and attention from the Director.
- **Pastor** – The G²G pastor is as special as the church. He or she will be chosen from the best pastors in our Conference. Sometimes this will be a new pastor for the G²G congregation, or sometimes this will be the currently serving pastor with a new set of goals and appointment agreements.
- **Church Leaders** – Local church leaders are the most important part of the G²G process. True greatness in a congregation comes from the commitment and passion of the lay leadership, not the personality of the pastor. Developing this culture of excellent leadership is a primary way for a good church to become great.

But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not a have righteousness of my own that comes for the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Philippians 3:7-9 – NIV

How to become a G²G church?

By now you've realized that not every church is ready for the G²G program. Each church in the process is selected through a 6-step entrance process.

1. **Nomination** – Each District Superintendent nominates churches for the G²G process. These churches are reviewed by the Director of Congregational Development, the Bishop, and the rest of the Cabinet. Nominated churches display signs of current strength and future potential. After agreement on their nomination, a church will be contacted by their District Superintendent to set up an invitation meeting.
2. **Invitation** – At an open meeting with the church leaders the District Superintendent will invite the church to apply for the G²G process. This invitation is time for questions and discussion, and it will conclude with a mutual commitment to pray and discern about the church's participation.
3. **Application** – The local church will complete the application for the G²G process (see end of this packet or web site for the application). This application is lengthy, but the point is to gather the best information possible to assist everyone in discerning a church's readiness for the G²G program.
4. **Discernment** – Through prayer, discussion, learning, and reflection everyone involved will seek to discover God's guidance about a church's involvement in the G²G process. The Bishop, the District Superintendent, the rest of the Cabinet, the Director of Congregational Development, the Pastor, and all of the congregation commit to a period of discernment when they eagerly and intentionally seek God's will for the local church.
5. **Covenant** – When everyone agrees that it is God's will to move forward, the District Superintendent will work with the church leaders to develop a covenant. Much of this covenant will be the same for every G²G church, but it may contain some specific and unique agreements. This covenant will carry the signature of the District Superintendent, the church's Lay Leader, the Pastor, and the Bishop.
6. **Evaluation** – On an annual basis, everyone will be asked to evaluate how they are doing in honoring the G²G covenant.

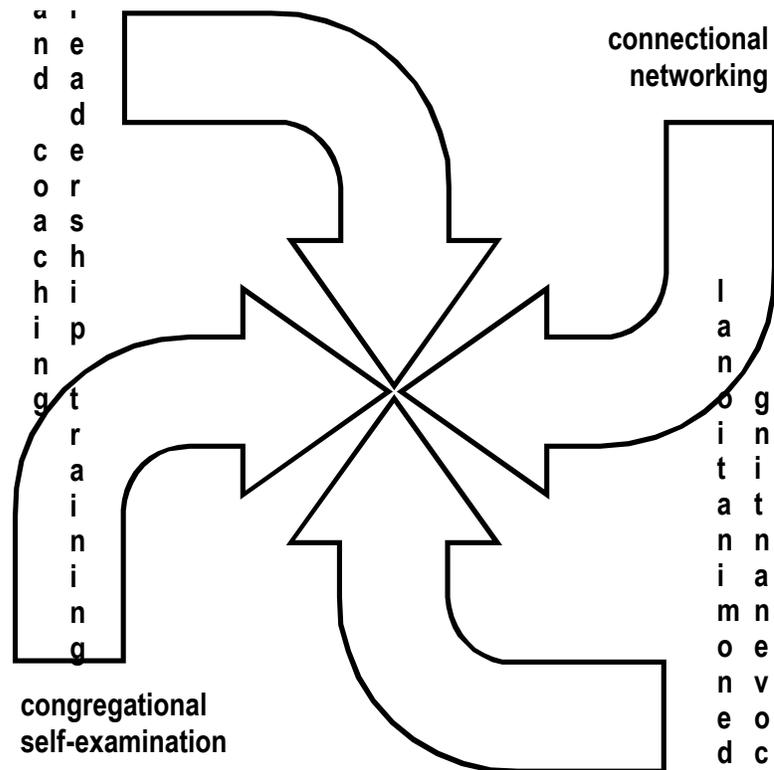
An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest."

Luke 9:46-48 – NIV

What's happens for G²G churches?

At the heart of the G²G process is focusing four critical areas of support onto a good congregation in order to help them discover the greatness God has envisioned for them.

Good congregations have a lot of things already going for them, so this isn't a process of laying down a pre-packaged template from another church and forcing them to fit into that mold. Instead the attention is focused on equipping local church leaders to discover for themselves how God is leading.



1. Congregational self-examination

Congregations begin by looking at their current reality. Where are they already seeing signs of great ministry? Do they have the right leaders in the right places? How are they making a difference in their community? Where do they need to improve their church? How do they need to celebrate in order to grow greater?

A group of church leaders will engage these questions using a variety of church self-assessment tools. From these tools, they'll develop a summary report of the congregations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Most churches will use these five standard assessments, but some others might also be included:

1. **Natural Church Development** – this survey focuses on assessing the health of the congregation in 8 quality characteristics of growing churches (www.ncd-international.com & www.churchsmart.com) [\$150]

2. **Healthy Congregations** – this workshop equips leaders to assess the emotional and systemic health of the congregation's relationships (www.impeacecenter.org or ejohnsonmoore@comcast.net) [?]
3. **The Complete Ministry Audit**, by Bill Easum – this book and survey assesses the nuts and bolts of a church's ministry, from adequacy of facility to strength of finances (www.easumbandy.com) [\$24]
4. **Ministry Area Profile** – this demographic report looks at the community area that a church serves in order to better understand how the church's ministries are making an impact (www.perceptnet.com) [\$340]
5. **Good to Great Diagnostic Tool** – this group questionnaire looks at Jim Collins' steps for great organizations and asks specific questions (www.jimcollins.com) [free download]

2. Leadership training & coaching

After the church develops a deep understanding of its current reality, the church will be helped to create a 3-5 year strategic plan to begin making changes. These changes will focus the congregation on moving forward into God's greater vision for their ministries. A major part of this plan will be focusing on equipping and empowering church leaders with the training and coaching they need to envision, inspire and lead change. This training will vary from church to church depending on the individual results of their self-assessment. The plan will also include specific timelines, measurable goals, and implementation tools. At identified times, the church will reevaluate its progress, plan and goals in order to make sure it's moving in the right direction.

3. Connectional networking

No United Methodist church is an island. We all stand together, and a great resource for developing greatness is networking with other good and great churches. In order to activate the resources of our connectedness, G²G churches will network up in three ways:

1. **G²G Church Leader Networking** – each year all of the key leaders of the G²G churches will be invited to gather for a special weekend retreat in order to share experiences and support with one another. G²G churches will also be encouraged to link up on-line and in person throughout the year. At the annual New England School of Congregational Development, G²G churches will have also have a time for gathering, learning and encouragement.

2. **G²G Pastor Networking** – in addition to their gatherings with the other church leaders, pastors of G²G churches will gather once a year for a day-long retreat to offer each other guidance and support. Pastors will also be invited to participate in a covenant and reading group, facilitated on-line, to help keep each other sharp and on target. Pastors will be given scholarship priority for further training and networking events.
3. **G²G Multiplication Mentoring** – often, the best way to integrate a new learning is to share it with someone else. Each G²G church's strategic plan will include mentoring another church to improve its ministries. This will include working directly with church leaders and pastors. Not every G²G church will be ready to begin this mentoring immediately, but each will be expected to develop a strategy to meet this goal.

4. Denominational covenanting

Helping churches become great is a group effort. Each G²G church will enter into a covenant with the leaders of the New England Conference, including the Bishop, District Superintendents, and Conference staff. The purpose of this covenant is to express the covenant partnership and investment in the G²G church. The church itself is taking on the bulk of work of growing great, but the denominational leaders also will take on some unique responsibilities. In addition to faithfully praying for the G²G church, denominational leaders agree to give priority attention to the needs of church in the G²G process, including programming, coaching, training and resourcing. In order to create a stable leadership culture, the Bishop and cabinet of District Superintendents will agree to fix the appointment of the pastor of a G²G church for the length of the G²G strategic plan (up to a maximum of 5 years). Each covenant will be developed at the beginning of the process, and it may be renegotiated but cannot be changed without the mutual agreement of all of the parties. A sample covenant is included in this overview.

Sample G²G church covenant

The central agreement of the G²G Church process is the mutual covenant between the local church, its leaders, its pastor, its District Superintendent, the Office of Congregational Development, and the Cabinet and Bishop. The covenant outlines the expectations and commitments of each party for the mutual benefit of the ministries of Christ through the local church.

Church Leaders Agree to:

- Grow in their faith and deepen their discipleship of Jesus Christ
- Pursue God’s vision of what their church can become
- Fully participate in G²G self-assessment and strategic planning process
- Make implementation of G²G plan the priority for local church resources
- Connect with other G²G churches through networking opportunities
- Pray for their church, its leaders, and each person in this covenant
- Multiply what they receive by mentoring another church

Pastor Agrees to:

- Grow in his/her faith and deepen his/her discipleship of Jesus Christ
- Be a fully participating part of the G²G church leadership team
- Connect with other G²G pastors through networking opportunities
- Pray for the church, its leaders, and each person in this covenant
- Multiply what he/she receives by mentoring another pastor

District Superintendent Agrees to:

- Grow in his/her faith and deepen his/her discipleship of Jesus Christ
- Fully support the G²G process with priority attention and personal prayer
- Prioritize District resources to support G²G strategic plans

Office of Congregational Development Agrees to:

- Fully support the G²G process with priority attention and personal prayer
- Prioritize Congregational Development resources and training to support G²G strategic plans
- Provide resources for assessment and coaching as available
- Regularly review G²G church’s progress on its strategic plan

Cabinet and Bishop Agree to:

- Fully support the G²G process with priority attention and personal prayer
- Regularly review G²G church’s progress on its strategic plan
- Fix the appointment of pastoral leadership during the implementation of the G²G strategic plan (up to a maximum of 5 years)

G²G church application

[Application in development]

Some questions:

- Basic questions on who, what, how
- Church Statistical trends – 10 year analysis
 - Attendance
 - Baptisms
 - Professions of faith (-confirmands)
 - Sunday School & children's education
 - Adult discipleship groups
- Church financial situation and trends
- Number of leaders
- Current ministries
- Missions & Mission Shares giving
- Current Church Profile
- Resumes of Church Staff

