



IGNITE

CHURCH PLANTING

Bringing hope to Chicagoland by starting churches

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2025 KEEPING OUR EYES OPEN

ACCELERATING JESUS' MISSION BY STARTING CHURCHES

Keeping Our Eyes Open *by Lance Hurley*

I was meeting with Andy Hamilton, lead minister at Adventure Christian Church, in Bradley, IL the other day when he told me an interesting story. He had been at a Chamber of Commerce event the preceding day when he engaged in conversation with the president of our local community college. The president asked him if Adventure would ever consider coming to the campus to provide spiritual growth opportunities for the students. He said, "We have a room that would be perfect for this if you are interested." Andy asked some questions and discovered that four other attempts had been made to do this type of ministry without success.

He and I talked about this and I said, "We need to consider doing something. The offer has been made and it appears the college is open to it. Let's pray on it and see what God tells us." Keeping our eyes open for opportunities the Father wants to bring our way is essential in our work of bringing the hope of Jesus to people by starting churches.

Jesus said in John 4, "Open your eyes and look to the fields! They are ripe for harvest." With this thought in mind, this edition of our newsletter will detail some of the stories of keeping the eyes open (with more to come).



Seeing Beyond the Fence *by Seth Rempel*



This past spring, part of my backyard fence fell down. At first, I was frustrated - home repair projects like that have never been one of my strengths. Several days later, as I sat outside reading, I noticed someone that I normally would not have been able to see.

It was Cortez, a young man I've known for years but hadn't seen in a long time. Because the fence was down, I saw him. We reconnected, had lunch, and he opened up about some struggles he'd been facing. We prayed together, and I began checking in regularly as I lifted him up in prayer. A short time later, I invited him to a men's small group that I felt God had been stirring me to start, and Cortez was one of the first to join!

That fallen fence turned out to be more than just a backyard project. It became a visual reminder that there are fences in my life - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual barriers - that can keep me from noticing people God wants me to see. When those fences come down, I can see different opportunities for connection, care, and discipleship that I would otherwise miss.

Jesus said in John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Being sent means allowing barriers to come down, seeing people the way Jesus sees them, and walking with them toward Him.

My prayer is that God would keep removing the fences in my life that block me from noticing the people around me. May He do the same for each of us, so we can see and love the people He's placed right on the other side.

Praying with Eyes Wide Open *by Daniel Hazel*

On September 13, Daniel and I did some prayer mapping in the Chicago neighborhood of Ravenswood, where he and Emma live. While there, we asked God to reveal things he wanted us to see, people he wanted us to meet and opportunities for disciple making that are present. It was good to pray together as ground is being prepared for the micro-church network that is beginning here.

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at 815.685.1939 | lance@ignitechurchplanting.com**



These are some of the things Daniel has been noticing as he watches and prays:

- There is a growing Filipino and Pacific Islanders population in Ravenswood. I have praying about how to reach them.
- Much of the community are well-off, so how can we reach people who don't think they need God?
- From what I am finding, many of the people aren't "de-churched." Rather, it is their grandparents who left the church, so it is generally three generations separated from knowing I who Jesus is.

Because of this, they often only know about Christianity only by sound bites and news clips. I am constantly praying for opportunities to have conversations that break through these barriers and show the way of Jesus that doesn't mean a political movement.

Celebrating What We are Seeing Internationally *by James Shahabi*

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus! I'm writing to share a joyful report from our recent ministry trip to Turkey, where we are actively involved in planting a new church and baptizing new believers—many of whom have come from Iran to publicly declare their faith in Christ.

This trip was especially blessed. Among those who traveled from Iran to be baptized, one woman brought her son with her—a young man who was not yet a believer. But by God's grace, something incredible happened: the Lord touched his heart during the days we spent together. He not only gave his life to Christ, but also chose to be baptized alongside his mother. Witnessing this mother and son get baptized on the same day was one of the most powerful and emotional moments of the entire trip. It reminded us again how God is in the business of saving entire families and writing new stories of redemption.



At the same time, we received the wonderful news that our church in Pakistan also baptized a group of new believers—this was their second baptism service in just two months. Altogether, 18 people in Pakistan have come to faith and been baptized during this short period. We are praising God for this spiritual harvest and the open doors He continues to provide in places we never imagined.

Looking ahead, we ask for your prayers for the next group of believers traveling from Iran to Turkey in about a month to be baptized. Please pray for their safety and spiritual preparation. This group is especially close to my heart, as my own mother is among them and desires to be baptized. I would deeply appreciate your prayers for her and for all the arrangements surrounding this upcoming trip.

Another exciting development during this mission was meeting a group of new believers in one of the cities in Turkey. They currently do not have a church to attend, and we are praying about the possibility of planting a church there as well. Interestingly, one of the long-time servants in our online church ministry—a faithful brother who has served as a pastor with us for many years—lives in this very city with his wife. If it is God's will to start a church there, we already have dedicated leaders ready to serve. Please pray with us for God's clear guidance and for the provision of every need to establish this new church.

We are deeply thankful for each of you who have supported us with your prayers and encouragement throughout this journey. Your spiritual partnership has led to real-life miracles—changed hearts, transformed lives, and churches being born in nations we never dreamed we'd reach. You are part of every testimony we share.



Minister's Gathering – October 28, 2025

Ignite Thriving Churches would like to invite all ministers to a gathering held at Maggiano's Little Italy in Naperville, IL on October 28, from 11:30 – 1pm. The speaker at the event will be David Upchurch, who recently authored the book, "The Disciple Making Grandparent". There will be food, fellowship and resources for all who attend. Please RSVP for this event by Oct 13 -- email: darla@ignitechurchplanting.com.

**If you know potential planters, please contact Lance Hurley: (815) 685-1939 or Lance@ignitechurchplanting.com
www.ignitechurchplanting.com**