

# GCI IN EUROPE

SEP Scotland 2016



Entertainment evening at Italian Festival, 2015



New group at Het Zand, Netherlands, 2016

## A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GRACE COMMUNION INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

COMPILED BY JAMES HENDERSON, AUGUST, 2016

# France

Our church in France is called Eglise Universelle de Dieu, and it is financially self-sufficient. Its 50<sup>th</sup> celebration year is 2017.

Its board operates under a French statute of 1905, which enables the right of religious assembly, and one of its articles links it to the doctrines of GCI HQ. Every two years the board may be renewed/re-elected at the church's General Assembly. The Board assigns the management of the church to a National Ecclesiastical Council. The provisions of the 1905 Act are not specifically expansive, and, therefore, in order to maximize the operations of the church, another organization, a cultural association called La Prudentielle, was established under a 1901 statute. This helps the church with its outreach projects as well as allowing the church more financial and administrative possibilities. A voluntary link between both these legal entities is created through goodwill and through overlapping boards.

At the time of our denominational name change there was a difficulty in finding an acceptable and meaningful translation, and, in addition, the French Préfecture, which is the relevant government body, recommended against trying to change the name.

The spokesperson for EUD is Marie-Angélique Picard.

There are 11 congregations in France, and, also, a congregation in Belgium, which has its own separate board and is a country administered pastorally by France. Attendance in France is between 250 and 300, with 3 active ordained ministers. The church also holds an annual convention, often in Evian on the shores of Lake Geneva.

Media projects include *La Vie Chrétienne* ("The Christian Life"), a French language publication which is accessed as a resource throughout the francophone world. Its website is <http://www.laviechretienne.com>

The French church also supports our churches in Martinique and Guadeloupe in different ways, and has formed an official union with them.

Other projects include helping the Italian church produce its magazine, *Seguimi*, helping fund a literacy program in Malawi, helping rebuild a school in Haiti, and participation in France's Fight against Hunger campaign.

*Marie-Angélique Picard*



Gérard and Claire Claude in the kitchen of the new church hall in Alsace area



# Germany

In Germany the Weltweite Kirche Gottes Deutschland, is formally registered as a public charitable foundation with legal capacity under civil law. The foundation's Board of Directors is currently composed of three Directors holding the offices of Secretary, Treasurer and Chairman. The Weltweite Kirche Gottes Deutschland does not have a salaried full-time CEO. The non-salaried Chairman, on behalf of the Board, holds executive functions in the operational areas. Our public German congregations are located in Leonberg and Taufkirchen. We also have house churches in Augsburg and Gemuenden. In addition, a number of Small Groups are scattered around the country. Our team of four bi-vocational pastors supported by two elders and two ministry leaders serve our 92 members (not counting associates) in the mentioned areas. In Austria, we do not at this time have any formal congregations. In our house church in Jambol, Bulgaria, we have 18 associates in regular attendance served by a local ministry leader.

Our work in Germany has a strong media ministry, including our flagship magazine *Nachfolge* and the connected Bulgarian and Russian sister editions. The national website can be found under [www.wkg.gci.org](http://www.wkg.gci.org)

The overarching and guiding mission of GCI/WKG Germany is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every possible way through all of activities of the foundation and through the service of all members and associates. To this effect GCI/WKG Germany has been involved in a number of charitable projects including the support of orphanages in Eastern Europe and the building of a medical facility in Africa. As opportunities allow, GCI/WKG Germany has also contributed resources and financial assistance to a number of varied charitable causes.

We would very much appreciate prayers for the work of our small organization as we continue to reach out to our local communities witnessing the love of Jesus.

God for us, in us and through us.

*Santiago Lange*



Left: The September 2015 cover of our Russian magazine, which is compiled and edited by Nicolai Nicolov

Right: *Nachfolge*



# Italy

Our church in Italy is called "Chiesa Cristiana della Grazia", and has limited funds.

It is registered in Italy as a branch of the California corporation, with a standing representative who has POA (Daniel Bösch).

Local matters are managed by the local leadership, which gathers 3 times a year, and is coordinated by the National Leader, Daniel Bösch, who is not employed by the Church.

As much as possible, local congregations cover their own expenses (hall rentals, public lectures, etc.), and any leftover funds are used for national projects, which include:

- Occasional travel by the National Leader.
- Occasional travel by local coordinators/teams.
- Production and distribution of a quarterly magazine called *Seguimi* ("Follow me"), which includes church news (from Italy and internationally), selected articles from GCI publications including editorials from Dr. Tkach, Bible studies from various authors and articles written by local members
- Running of a national Website (<http://www.ccdg.it>) which includes the Italian magazine, church literature, *Day by Day* articles translated from the UK website, Videos from Dr Tkach, information about local congregations, etc.
- The annual, national 4-day Festival with an average attendance of about 90 members and guests from neighbouring countries such as Switzerland and France.

There are 9 congregations/home churches, and attendance is 80 to 90, with 2 ordained ministers and local coordinators or leadership teams).

*Daniel Boesch*



Four baptisms at Montegrotto Festival, 2016



# Netherlands & Dutch Flanders

Our church in the Netherlands is called Grace Communion International Netherlands (GCI Netherlands since 2011), and it is financially self-sufficient.

We have a central website ([www.gracecommunion.nl](http://www.gracecommunion.nl)) and two local websites: [www.gemeentedehoeksteen.nl](http://www.gemeentedehoeksteen.nl) and [www.gemeentehetkompas.nl](http://www.gemeentehetkompas.nl)

Attendance is approx. 100 members weekly.

Its board meets regularly to review finances and policies. GCI HQ is represented on the board in an official manner on an annual basis when either the GCI HQ President or his proxy (typically the European RD) sits on the Board.

The Board appoints a CEO (national Director/National Pastor) to manage the affairs of the church. The CEO (National Director/National Pastor) is Frans Danenberg, paid part-time.

There are 5 congregations in Netherlands and 1 in Antwerp in Belgium, in Dutch-speaking Flanders, with 4 active ordained ministers (Jesse Korver is emeritus, and still preaching half the year) and two pastoral teams. In 2011 we came into contact with brethren from Congo and Burundi in Stiens, Friesland, and had church meetings at their home for one and a half year. They almost all came from our churches from Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. On the 3 February 2013 we started the congregation Jesus Victory Celebration Centre, part of Grace Communion, in Leeuwarden. We use a church building of PKN Church (the protestant Church in Netherlands), and have a very warm and good cooperation with them. Mr Matendo Makoti was ordained pastor on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2013, and Mr R Bizimana as a deacon. Translation at services is done from Swahili into Dutch, every sermon is recorded on the Internet and can be heard two months after that. The church is active in the radio station Umoja radio in Buitenpost, Friesland, which broadcasts to every Swahili speaking country. A local protestant Church is also supporting this endeavor.

The pastor of Leeuwarden is also participating in evangelization in Rwanda, Denmark and Congo together with other African pastors, with the foundation of Pastor Kahindo Kasinde. We had talks with Pastor Kahindo Kasinde about joining Grace Communion, and we had a first meeting in his house with 18 people present in the northern part of the Netherlands (*you can see the picture of the meeting on the top, right below*). We have translations of the statement of faith, Code of conduct etc. and other important articles thanks to Br Francis Nyoike in Kenya, for the Swahili speaking members. We had three baptisms last year.

We have a training course for future leaders called Being Church Together. The content is 95% from GCI, and is available in Dutch and English, and has been put together by Hans and Denise de Moei of the Tiel congregation.

As a diaconal project, we help people locally who are in need, on a small scale, especially now when the government is withdrawing funds centrally. We support a Christian family in Togo, and 4 orphans of a Congolese church member, who lives in Tiel, Netherlands, in Lagos, Nigeria, paying their monthly house rent.

In Almere we are part of Evangelical Contact, a group of 22 denominations, who meet regularly for breakfast and prayer together and work together in Christian projects. Starting services in a new area of Almere (Nobelhorst) is also part of our plans.

In Tiel the congregation meets every three weeks in a garage to evangelize among Muslims in that neighborhood. In 2017 street evangelism is planned. In Tilburg we participate in a group meeting of local churches, and are active in street evangelism. In Antwerp we are member of the Evangelical Alliance Vlaanderen (as a congregation). In Zwolle the pastoral coordinator is active in a group called Geloven Nu (Believing Now).

*Frans Danenberg*



Praising God in the Netherlands

## Portugal

Our church in Portugal is called "Igreja de Deus Mundial" and has limited funding.

The financial crisis in Portugal has seriously affected Portugal as a whole and as a consequence the local church has had no donations in the last couple of years.

GCI HQ is linked to the church registration in Portugal. The directors appoint a CEO to manage the affairs of the church. There are currently two board members.

The National Ministry leader is José Ribeiro.

There is one congregation which meets as a house group in different members' homes in the Lisbon area. At one time we were about 25 in attendance and meeting bi-monthly. Now we are about 5-7 people holding meetings whenever possible. Several members have moved away from Portugal in search of jobs within Europe, also several members are scattered within the country and unable to meet as a group. We keep in touch via phone and email. Our website is <http://www.idm.pt>

We send sermons/messages in Portuguese and also translations of articles in English to our brethren in Angola (Oliveira Kitambala) and to Mozambique (Manuel João Morrumbala). The latest news from Angola is that they are going through hardships once more after a period of relative prosperity.

*José Ribeiro*



Igreja de Deus Mundial  
PORTUGAL



# Scandinavia

Our church in Scandinavia includes the countries of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, each with separate boards, which have been financially responsible for the activities in these countries since 1995. Estonia is the outreach project of the church in Scandinavia, where we have a handful of members in Tartu, Estonia.

The boards are responsible for the financial care of the church and present the financial yearly accounts to the church members. GCI HQ is linked to the boards as part of Board policy.

The coordinating ministry leader for Scandinavia is Carl Fredrik Aas. Donald Boddie is a local elder in Denmark. Our website is <http://www.gvks.org>

There are congregations in Oslo, Stavanger and Bergen in Norway, Stockholm in Sweden, Copenhagen in Denmark and Tartu in Estonia and attendance varies from 6 to 12 people in the different places. There are 44 baptised members in these countries some of whom are scattered and we see only once or twice a year. For this reason, it is important for us to have two festivals a year: one in the spring and one in the fall, where as many as possible try to attend.

Since 1998 the church in Scandinavia has produced more than 70 booklets in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. We produce now four booklets a year in each language. The booklets are free of charge and our readership is in 2016 about 600 readers. The titles of the booklets this year are: The life of Apostle Paul part two, The peace of God, The pitfalls of Christianity, and Jerusalem the city of God. The church has also published one book – a novel concerning the principles of the Sermon on the Mount in Norwegian, and an easy to read commentary on the gospel of John in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. The novel on the Sermon on the Mount is recommended by the main authority on the gospel of Matthew in Norway.

Estonia has been our outreach project and Carl Fredrik Aas has held more than 50 public lectures in Estonia since 1996. Because of health reasons he has not been able to do so for the last two years. The church has held seven summer school programs for the youth of a poor Estonian town of Kallaste, which has been a win-win project for all. The mayor of the town has asked us to come each year for the next 20 years. But we have not been able to hold a summer school this year because of health reasons.

The church in Scandinavia is an aging church with few new young members: there have been no new baptisms this year. The future of the church is a major concern.

*Carl Fredrik Aas*



<http://www.gvks.org>

# Spain

Our church in Spain is legally called **Comunión Internacional de la Gracia**, and has limited funding. Around 50% of the yearly budget comes from the festival offerings and from donors outside of Spain.

It has a board to review finances and policies. The board meets two times a year to monitor the CEO (National Director), ensure compliance with policies, to set up new policies or change/update the church's statutes, and to control/approve the yearly budget. The Board appoints a CEO (National Director) to manage the affairs of the church. The CEO is Pedro Rufián. The **CIG** is legally, by its statutes approved by GCI HQ's Legal Department, a totally administratively independent national religious entity. But it is linked to GCI HQ theologically by the ecclesiastical appointment of the CEO at the proposal of the National Board to GCI. To terminate the National Director, Grace Communion International would have to consult with the CIG's National Board of Directors.

There is one congregation, and the attendance is 6-12 people, with an active ordained minister, Pedro Rufián. The 45 baptized members of the church in Spain (around 60 people with families) are scattered all around the country. To the scattered families the **CIG** sends out a monthly CD with the recorded messages from the Madrid congregation as a way to keep the scattered members spiritually nourished.

The CIG publishes, prints and mails out to 400 subscribers its 32 pages' booklet side magazine **Verdad y Vida** five times a year. This is the main mission work of the church in Spain. Each year around Christmas or Easter time the **CIG** has an outreach evangelistic project. Last Christmas we translated, designed, printed and distributed 6,000 copies of the "Good News for All" tract that HQ wrote. Beside the great message of hope contained in it, we advertised and offered a free subscription to our **Verdad y Vida** magazine and advertised the **CIG** website and offered other services to the community around the meeting hall, such as family, marriage and Christian counselling and Bible Studies at home. Sadly, just two people has asked for a free subscription to the magazine. So you can see the low response to the Gospel message in Spain nowadays. But we will continue sowing the seed of God's Word as long as He will continue providing the funds to do so and as we are able.

Three years ago the **CIG** designed, created and currently administers and maintains its website: [www.comuniondelagracia.es](http://www.comuniondelagracia.es) So far it has received more than 28.000 visits, most of them coming from the USA and South American countries. So the website is the second mission work instrument of the church in Spain.

The **CIG** organizes a yearly autumn spiritual retreat to welcome international visitors, and to give to the small church in Spain the opportunity to experience the worldwide flavor of our denomination.



Left: Pedro Rufián in his basement office at his home near Madrid, 2016

Right: Verdad y Vida



## Switzerland

Our small but lively church in Switzerland is called "Weltweite Kirche Gottes". It is incorporated legally as a local association called "Verein Weltweite Kirche Gottes". It has a board to review finances and policies. GCI HQ is linked to the board as part of the Board policy.

The annual assembly appoints the Board members and the President of the association. Toni Püntener is the current president of the Association.

The National Ministry leader is appointed by GCI HQ's European Regional Director and is a member of the Board. Daniel Bösch (a Swiss national resident in Italy and not employed by the Swiss church) is the current ministry leader and visits the church at least 2-3 times a year. The UK church assists the local leadership with a Leadership weekend by sending a UK minister to Switzerland (local costs are covered by Swiss funds, flights covered by the UK church).

There is one combined congregation in the greater Zurich area, and attendance is around 20, with a non-ordained leadership team (with the exception of a deacon). In addition, some members actively participate by giving sermons or helping out running worship services. Total membership is 35. The Swiss church:

- gives assistance to projects in various countries (e.g the magazine *Seguimi* in Italy, funding our Bulgarian contact to attend training the Swiss Festival).
- contributes financially and operationally to the German Magazine called *Nachfolge* ("Follow me").
- organizes a yearly 4-day Festival and various social activities throughout the year.
- holds worship services every second week.
- has a national Website ([wkg-ch.org](http://wkg-ch.org), which features various church literature, information about activities and links to international church websites).



Swiss Festival, 2015



Visit of Pete and Jackie Mill to Switzerland

## UK & Ireland

The Worldwide Church of God UK, the founding church, “*also known as Grace Communion International*” by a Board of Trustees’ resolution, was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1960 and registered as a charity in 1963.

The Church/Charity/Company operates within its own Memoranda and Articles of Association, and these note that the Board of Trustees submits itself voluntarily to the doctrinal direction of GCI HQ. Its website is [www.gracecom.church](http://www.gracecom.church) (www.gci.org.uk is owned by another company), and we are currently promoting the “Gracecom” name in our literature and media. The church is financially independent, and its annual accounts are audited by the Board’s appointed external auditors.

The governing Board of Trustees assesses risks and sets policies as it sees fit, and delegates the management of the Church to its CEO, who is James Henderson, a part-time employee. Also, the Board has agreed that a portion of its current CEO’s time can be used by HQ in his role as European MD (RD), and, in addition, the UK church subsidizes his related travel expenses in continental Europe. The pastoral and administrative needs of our members and contacts in the Republic of Ireland are also overseen by the UK CEO, and one of our Irish members sits on the Board as a Trustee. The church owns an office building in Market Harborough, with its own full-time Office Manager (Business Manager) who is accountable directly to the CEO.

There are 42 churches with an attendance of between 650 and 800.

The Church seeks opportunities to engage itself in the redemptive work of the Gospel *individually* through the lives of its members and contacts as well as *congregationally, nationally, and internationally*.

*Individually*, it encourages personal relational evangelism, and members and contacts receive monthly communication in the form of a magazine called *In Touch*, which contains a letter from either the President of GCI or from the UK’s CEO. A daily Bible study site, *Day by Day*, is available for reflection and edification and is written mainly by members. *Day by Day* is used by other GCI areas worldwide. Retreats, festivals, and seminars are made available on a regular basis.

*Congregationally*, many of our churches and groups are involved in their own local outreach projects, and network with churches of other denominations as they see fit. Congregations receive pastoral care from pastoral workers (we have three of them, all of whom are employed part-time), non-salaried elders, pastoral councils and/or congregational leaders. A mission fund is made available from the Church's central funds for missional activities.

*Nationally*, media activities include our *Because* magazine and website ([www.because.uk.com](http://www.because.uk.com)), regular *Godspots* on UCB radio, *Speaking of Life* scripts read out in UCB Ireland, etc. In addition, the church subsidizes a Christian Activity Camp (sepuk.org) as one of its contributions to society and to the greater body of Christ. About 40% of the campers are unchurched, and, for a number of the staff, SEP is an annual church.

*Internationally*, the Church has sent financial aid following natural disasters to places such as Haiti, the Philippines, Nepal and Mozambique. We have helped finance the 2015 all-African pastoral conference; we have assisted our Tororo church in Uganda in the form of providing HIV counselling training, by building a church community centre, and by helping build and continuing to support a primary school; also, various congregations have helped individually with church projects in Malawi, West Africa and the DRC; from our central funds we have helped establish a church presence in an Islamic North African country, where we now have six baptized members; getting closer to home, we provide pastoral care for members in some Mediterranean areas such as Greece, and offer sponsorship to our own SEP for a number of overseas campers; and, we also host and subsidize the European Denominational Conference, which enables the ongoing training and development not only of our own pastoral and ministerial helpers, but also of our European colleagues.

The Church is committed to the ongoing education of its members and ministry, and therefore holds small regional conferences/seminars in addition to the denomination conference that it holds every year or so. There are often international and local guest speakers. The US weekly update link is mailed to all its congregational leaders, and *Equipper* magazine is highlighted in the update.

With a view to its future pastoral needs and to the idea of succession planning, the Church is sponsoring five people through GCS and another two in local Bible colleges.

*James Henderson*



International speakers or seminars: Rick Sholly (larger) from the US and Kalengule Kaama from Africa

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I'm sure you will have heard of the 6.2 magnitude earthquake that struck central Italy on Wednesday this week. Its



## MAP OF EUROPE



Above  
Day by

elow:

**day** BY **day**

Growing Together in Life and Faith

