

4:1 Dollar Match Helps Build Christian Churches

In what he called a “ground-breaking event,” Dan Betzer, senior pastor of First Assembly of God church in Fort Myers, Fla., said the International Cooperative Ministries raised between \$10 million and \$15 million for **missions** during its initial Great Commission World Summit at his church last weekend.

The event hosted more than 1,000 businessmen from throughout the United States and Europe, was televised by the Total Christian Television network and by satellite, and was streamed over the Internet to hundreds of thousands around the globe.

The convention was held to raise money to build churches all over the world. In its 26 years, ICM has helped build more than 4,200 churches in 63 countries.

Great Commission World Summit Chairman John Patrick said that the Board of Trustees consists of several billionaires and wealthy Christians. The board had a goal of at least a 2-to-1 match for fund that churches raised as a result of their missions efforts.

“By the grace and power of God it looks like we are going to be closer to a 4-to-1 match,” Patrick said. “The significance of the match is that any denomination is able to receive it as long as they are evangelical churches.”

Betzer, one of the keynote speakers, was pleased with the outcome of the inaugural event.

“I have a heart and a passion for missions,” a former executive officer with the General Council of the **Assemblies of God** who has himself pioneered seven churches. “Our church

is certainly committed to missions, and I have a burden to see something really explode in that area.

“We’re hoping to see a reawakening of the great commission for evangelical churches throughout the world, and this event was certainly a blessing and a step in that direction. Overall, it was a great success.”

The convention featured an incredible lineup of guest speakers, including **Hobby Lobby** Founder and CEO David Green, Christian evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, International Cooperating Ministries Founder and Chair Emeritus Dois Rosser, former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft and Tanzanian Assemblies of God Superintendent Archbishop Barnabas Mtokambali.

“Each one of the speakers had a very different perspective, but they were all extremely anointed,” Betzer said. “Dois Rosser’s story is incredible. He’s 91 years young and still going—a giant and a patriarch. Mr. Ashcroft, David Green and Reinhard Bonnke—they were all incredible.”

International Cooperating Ministries is one of the most efficient church-building organizations. The strength of their model requires each church to produce five daughter congregations in the next three years. This leverage can be seen in the fact that the 4,200 original churches have now produced a total of 28,000 churches globally.

The original churches are required to have 100 members regularly attending and must be able to support the pastor full-time.

“I used to donate money for Bibles to get distributed, but that was \$2 per Bible to pretty much anywhere in the world,” Patrick said. “They (ICM) also has a church building that serves as a launching pad to do what the church was called to do—to nurture its believers through an intensive Bible study program; to provide food, water, shelter, medical clinics,

schools and vocational training.

“Because of these roles that the church fulfills, the physical church building becomes the focal point of the local community in many of these countries.”

Betzer said he believes the weekend’s event is only the start of something big annually, and that his staff got to work on next year’s convention immediately.

“We’ve got a long of long-distance calls and emails from leaders and business people who want to continue to get involved,” Betzer said. “It’s thrilling to me because of the interest we’ve gathered on this. We can’t wait until next year to keep the momentum going on this.”

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