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THE MAGAZINE OF U.S. MENNONITE BRETHREN

APRIL / MAY 2014

from the editor



“

You and I may not invent the next World Wide Web, but we can use our God-given ingenuity and resourcefulness at our jobs and in our homes, communities and churches in ways that celebrate goodness and make the world more the way God intends it to be.

”



Connie Faber
Editor

When was the last time you celebrated the gift of human invention? A recent occasion for me was March 16 when our daughter looked up from her smartphone and reported that with half of the results in, 95 percent of Crimea voters were in favor of splitting with Ukraine and joining Russia. Two hours before, during the Sunday morning worship service, our congregation had prayed about the vote. And now thanks to all that goes into smartphone technology, we knew at least something about how this international crisis was playing out.

Last month the World Wide Web, an innovation that has significantly changed how we get our news, turned 25. Tim Berners-Lee published a paper March 12, 1989, proposing an “information management” system that became the conceptual and architectural structure for the World Wide Web. The British computer scientist released the code for his system—for free—to the world on Christmas Day 1990. It became a milestone in easing the way for ordinary people to access documents and interact over a network of computer networks called the Internet, a system that had been around for years. For many of us, Lee’s invention has become synonymous with the Internet, even though that is technically not the case.

Using the Web—browsing it, searching it and sharing it—has become a major activity for millions of people around the globe. In addition to changing how we get, share and create news, the Internet has impacted how we learn, how we do our jobs and how we communicate with friends and family. It is influencing how we do church (see the news story on page 21).

A new series of reports from The Pew Research Center marking the 25th anniversary of the Web shows that we Americans generally feel positive about the Internet’s impact on our lives and personal relationships. Pew also reports that while experts anticipate that by 2025 the Internet will flow through our lives “like electricity” and are hopeful about the future of the Internet, they are also concerned about things like interpersonal ethics, surveillance, terror and crime.

While it’s true that human inventions and discoveries often have both positive and negative results, I am thankful that God gives us curiosity and the desire to imagine, explore and create. You and I may not invent the next World Wide Web, but we can use our God-given ingenuity and resourcefulness at our jobs and in our homes, communities and churches in ways that celebrate goodness and make the world more the way God intends it to be.

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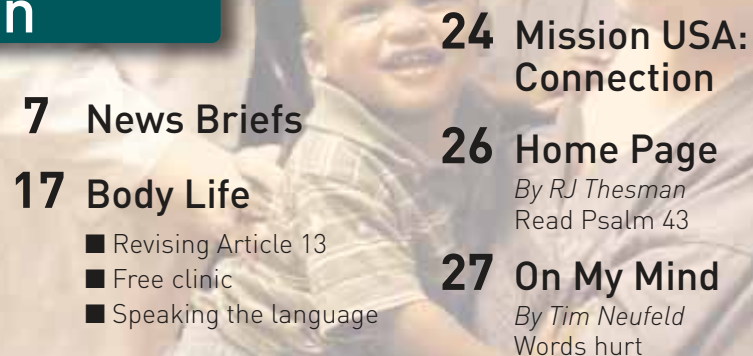
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Center insert — *MB Mission*

Partnering as one family to serve one Lord on one mission, for the transformation of individuals, families and communities.

www.usmb.org



Pat Coyle

With the celebrations of Palm Sunday, Passion Week and Easter Sunday upon us again, our thoughts often go to passages such as Psalm 22. In this psalm, David writes in several cycles of thoughts reflecting both his suffering at the hands of enemies and his confidence in God.

The first cycle begins in verses 1-5 where he says he feels forsaken by God but also remembers that his ancestors had put their trust in the Lord. The second cycle is found in verses 6-10 as he describes his enemy's attacks against him, but remembers his faith in the Lord even at a young age. In the third and final cycle, David again describes his suffering at the hands of enemies and concludes with a prayer of deliverance (vv. 11-21). The psalm concludes with a strong message of praise to God for his deliverance and a confident hope for future generations of believers (vv. 22-31).

Often, when we think of this psalm during the Easter season, we connect it to the sufferings of Jesus on the cross and his fulfillment of prophecy (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). Of course this is true, but there's much more we can learn from Psalm 22 than just those important truths. For example, David concludes that because past generations had trusted in the Lord he could too (vv. 4-5). He also goes back to his trust in God as a child as he faced a need for help (vv. 10-11). Finally, he writes about proclaiming the praises of God in the midst of trials (vv. 22-24) and the impact that will have on future generations (vv. 30-31).

With all of this in mind, I think of the importance of the church when we find ourselves in the midst of difficulties. It's in the church where we hear stories from older generations who have experienced God's faithfulness in trials. It's in the church where we affirm the faith of children, knowing that they too will someday face difficulties that will challenge their beliefs. And it's in the church where we can proclaim the praises of a God who uses each generation to impact the next, with some of the greatest lessons coming through trials.

With all of its shortcomings, disappointments and weaknesses, the church is still the place where God continues to fulfill the truths of Psalm 22. Let's commit ourselves to give praise to the Lord during this Easter season with the confidence that we serve a living, loving God!

Pat Coyle is the senior pastor at Shafter (Calif.) MB Church.

"I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you." Psalm 22:22

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See story on page 12

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Eternity in our hearts

On occasion I am asked questions about do-overs. “Would you go back in time if you could?” Or, “If you could, would you want to live your life over again?” My instinctive response is most always, “Absolutely!” I love living, and most days I love my life.

Not everyone is so inclined. A lot of people endure challenges in their lives far more intense than mine. It makes total sense that they would not be enthusiastic about living their lives over again. But the hardships of my life have not been so severe as to tip the scale in the direction of reluctantly hanging on until I close my eyes in death. Life and breath are a sacred trust for me. From my vantage point, the thrills and spills of life are a grand privilege. The turmoil of intense challenges and the anguish of deep hurts are not enough to steal away the joy of living.

The will to live is powerful. Before my father graduated into the presence of the Lord, we talked about how hard it was to be elderly and somewhat incapacitated. He would say things like, “Oh Ed, I just want to go to heaven,” and “I so much want that it be my time soon.” But then days later, when it was time for an appointment with the cardiologist to have his pacemaker checked out, he was nothing but enthused about that doctor’s visit. He too loved living.

Some decades ago, I strummed my guitar as we sang a folksy little song that included the line, “We’re gonna live forever, that’s what Jesus said....” Perhaps it was then—in my early adult years—that I first got in touch with actually wanting to live forever. Since then, it has been part of my plan to do whatever possible to stretch living to its capacity, by packing a lot into the present and by upping the odds for the fu-

ture by eating more salads than French fries and more oat bran than bacon.

One of the sacred privileges of living is to try, after stumbling, to get it right the next time. Messing up is part of our reality. Even the apostle Paul, our heroic spiritual giant, was transparent enough to write that he ended up doing the stuff he didn’t want to and not doing the stuff he wanted to. When I play golf, I get that feeling a lot. Man, I’d like to have that swing over again. And while that can’t happen, thankfully, there is always another tee box coming. Life most often offers us that opportunity. That makes for epic living.

Now and again I ponder why it is that I want so badly to live life to the full and live it long and to live it over again hypothetically if given the chance. My tentative conclusion is that it is because I was designed to live forever. The wisdom of Solomon led him to conclude that, “God has also set eternity in the human heart” (Eccles. 3:11).

This wisdom was a gift to Solomon from that same creator God. He can’t have been wrong. That’s it then. The reason for the inexorable will to live is because that is how God made me. And you. The reason for the intense desire to live life long and to the full is because that is God’s design for us.

John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus said he came to give “abundant life.” My sense is that a sincere commitment to live life with a desire for intimate partnership with God nourishes the idea of doing so for as long as possible. What I know for sure is that my heart wants this to go on forever.

The reason for the intense desire to live life long and to the full is because that is God’s design for us.

He wrote a check

This is a story of how a stranger changed a life when he wrote a check. Our child graduated from high school with general interests in areas of study, the intention to earn a college degree and the hope of leaving home for a Christian college experience. But there was no clear-cut plan.

The recurring issue was money. In state or out of state didn't seem to matter. Even with all the grants, scholarships and loans added up, every school we considered was still too far out of reach financially. The economy had done us no favors in recent years: a lost business, an upside down mortgage, aging cars and bills that just kept coming.

Deadlines were approaching and the only option seemed to be "none of the above." Yet we also sensed God's direction toward a certain school—one of two owned by U.S. Mennonite Brethren. We were praying, but if God had a plan, he wasn't letting us in on it.

In a casual conversation, my wife shared our child's college dream with a woman from our church who has an affinity for this USMB school. But there was no way it could happen, my wife said. The financial requirement was too far beyond our means.

A few days later, this woman called to say she knew of someone who had resources to make this school happen for us. "You pray, and I'll ask," she said. We did, and she did. And a few days later she and her husband brought us a check from this third individual. The amount was more than we thought we needed. It was more than we could have ever come up with. "To cover unanticipated expenses," they said, and there have been those.

We were stunned—as you would expect—but you should have seen their faces. As they gave us the check, there was joy in their eyes like I've rarely seen. They knew, and we knew, how precious this

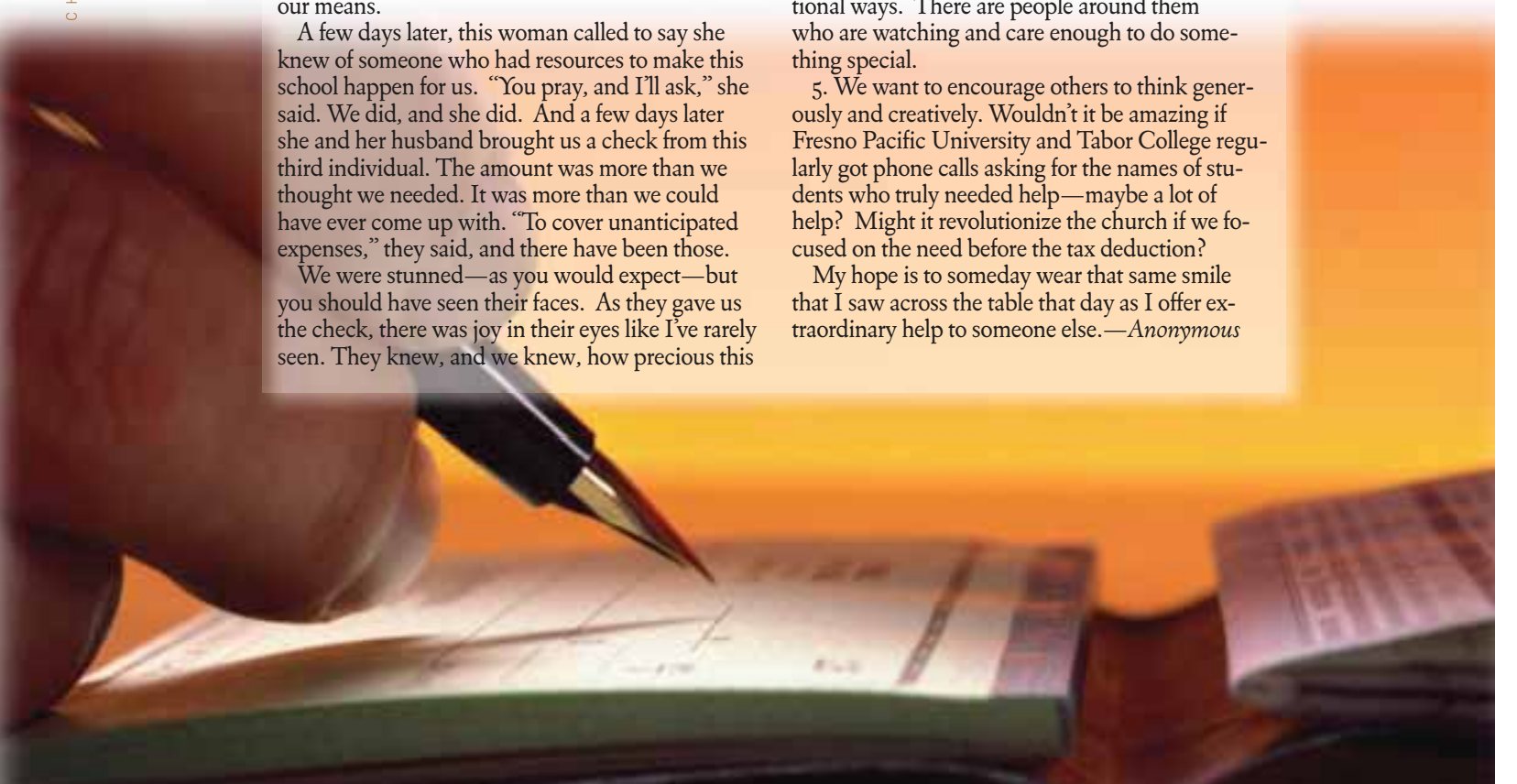
was. The Bible says to give joyfully, and we witnessed it that day.

Because the donor ignored the normal methods of doing things and chose to target one specific need, there was no tax deduction. And there is no "thank you" letter signed by the CEO of a foundation or scholarship fund nor is the donor listed in a publication. All this donor has is a picture of a former stranger pinned to his wall. He is committed to praying for our student, and we know he will. He has the gratitude of a student and family whose lives have been forever impacted.

I share this story—and do so anonymously—for five reasons.

1. Good news stories need to be shared. They are all too rare. We want you to rejoice with us. This lifts everyone up.
2. We want to thank the people involved in a way that is tangible and heartfelt, without embarrassing anyone.
3. All the glory and credit goes to God, the only true provider. So often he shows up "just in time."
4. We want students, especially at our two MB schools, to hope and believe that their dreams can happen, sometimes in surprising and unconventional ways. There are people around them who are watching and care enough to do something special.
5. We want to encourage others to think generously and creatively. Wouldn't it be amazing if Fresno Pacific University and Tabor College regularly got phone calls asking for the names of students who truly needed help—maybe a lot of help? Might it revolutionize the church if we focused on the need before the tax deduction?

My hope is to someday wear that same smile that I saw across the table that day as I offer extraordinary help to someone else.—Anonymous



USMB records strong finish for 2013 fiscal year

USMB finished its 2013 fiscal year with a strong, positive balance of \$34,889 and is moving forward in 2014 with its full slate of ministry opportunities.

USMB is in the process of shifting from a June 1 to May 31 fiscal year to a calendar fiscal year. As part of this process, the national conference had a seven-month fiscal period that concluded Dec. 31, 2013. Preliminary financial reports were released Jan. 31, and a final audit of this abbreviated fiscal year will be completed later this spring.

On the expense side, the preliminary report shows that expenses came in under budget by \$32,000; expenses for the seven-month period had been budgeted at \$486,377. This contributed to the positive operating budget.

Income for USMB comes primarily from two sources: church contributions and donations from individuals. Church giving for the seven-month transition period was budgeted at \$254,000. Although church giving was strong in December, overall church contributions fell short of the goal by \$34,870.

Donations from individuals are becoming a key source of USMB funding, particularly for church planting projects. 2013 marked the second year of an ambitious 10-year goal to annually plant six churches in the United States. Mission USA, the USMB church planting and church renewal ministry, is leading this effort.

USMB staff hoped to raise \$183,525 from individuals during the abbreviated 2013 fiscal year. When all was said and done, USMB executive director Ed Boschman and Mission USA director Don Morris raised \$271,657.

"We are pleased to be able to reassure our partner districts and specifically their district ministers and church planting boards that we can move ahead with passion and confidence," said Steve Schroeder, Leadership Board chair, in an earlier announcement concerning the 2013 fiscal year. *"We are deeply thankful that significant fund-raising efforts by both Don and Ed resulted in generosity by God's people and partner churches."*—USMB

Tabor offers TED-style event

Tabor College Wichita, the Wichita, Kan., campus of the Mennonite Brethren-owned college in the Midwest, is offering an e-Lab event April 24. "Conversations from the intersection of faith and human need" is modeled after the popular TED Talks, a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas through short, powerful talks, and will focus on "see a need, fill a need." Scheduled speakers include Leonard Sweet, scholar of American culture, popular author and sought-after speaker; Randy Friesen, executive director of MB Mission, the global mission agency of Mennonite Brethren; Monica Epperson, co-founder and CEO of The Children of Divorce, a nonprofit dedicated to mitigating the negative effects of divorce on children; Bill Vann, pastor and visionary of Iasis Christian Center and facilitator and director of urban youth services in the Wichita area; and Joe Skillen, blogger and lead pastor at Faith Community Church, Wichita. The free event will be held at First MB Church, Wichita, Kan., 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. For more information or to register, contact Rick Bartlett at rickb@tabor.edu.—TC



Leonard Sweet



Randy Friesen

Conexion 2014 workshops equip

Workshops offered during Conexion 2014 will equip and resource attendees. Those attending the National Pastors Conference can attend workshops Friday afternoon. In addition to workshops on clergy tax and LOGOS Bible software, pastors and spouses will have opportunity to network with those in similar ministries through affinity groups.

"Networking with colleagues who have similar assignments creates alignment for discussion and idea exchanges that can be very meaningful and helpful," says Ed Boschman, USMB executive director.

Ten different workshops will be offered Saturday afternoon during the National Convention. Boschman says the topics address issues that local churches and church leaders face.

"One of our USMB goals is to provide added value to our churches and pastors by encouraging and resourcing them to grow in effectiveness for their service to Jesus and his church," Boschman says. For details about Conexion 2014 workshops, see www.usmb.org/conexion-2014-workshops. Register for Conexion 2014 at www.usmb.org/c2014registration.



byTheNumbers

MILLIONS OF PEEPS

Each Easter season, Americans buy more than **700 million** marshmallow shaped chicks, bunnies and eggs, making them the most popular non-chocolate Easter candy.

As many as 5 million Marshmallow Peeps and other shapes are made daily in preparation for Easter.

Yellow Peeps are the most popular, followed by pink, lavender, blue and white.

In 1953, it took 27 hours to create a Marshmallow Peep. Today it takes six minutes.

Source: Infoplease.com

5 minutes with...

CHEYENNE DERKSEN

Cheyenne Derksen, Tabor College junior from First MB Church in Wichita, Kan., is headed to Washington, D.C.'s, Kennedy Center this spring. She is one of eight regional winners in the Institute of Theater Journalism and Advocacy, a national competition for students interested in writing theater reviews and critiques to promote theater through journalism.



1 Why does theater need advocates?

Theater offers a lot to every type of person. Like Jesus teaching stories and parables, plays convey a moral by telling stories.

2 Where does your interest in theater come from?

I was very quiet growing up, but in eighth grade I tried out for the school play. My teachers couldn't believe that I was running screaming across the stage. I loved surprising people. After that, theater was my identity because it gave me a place to belong.

3 How did you get started with writing reviews?

It's impossible for me to watch something without talking about (or through) it. I always have to go with someone so I can discuss and evaluate on the way home. I took one class in journalism, but until now I never thought I would use it.

4 What can the church learn from theater culture?

Theater people are very honest about themselves. I feel like the church is really good at hiding. In a more honest church people would admit their faults and help each other through it.

5 You're a big fan of *The Hunger Games*. Give us a thumb-nail review.

Messianic Katniss Everdeen is tribute for her district in the dystopian government's annual Hunger Games, a true children's crusade. Each lottery-picked tribute under age 18 fights until death, where the winner preserves peace in the post-apocalyptic, warzone nation. Katniss instead learns to resist and submit in battling oppression just to live.

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

Historical Commission names intern

Yoshio Fujii, a Japanese graduate student at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, has been awarded the 2014 MB Historical Commission archival internship. *As intern, Fujii will spend a total of five weeks in May and June visiting each of the four MB archival centers in North America—Fresno, Calif., Hillsboro, Kan., Winnipeg, Man., and Abbotsford, BC.* In addition to experiencing a functioning archive, he will explore the material housed in these church archives, especially as they relate to the church in Japan. The internship is made possible with support from U.S. and Canadian Mennonite Brethren Churches. FPBS is the Mennonite Brethren denominational seminary in Fresno, Calif.—*HC*

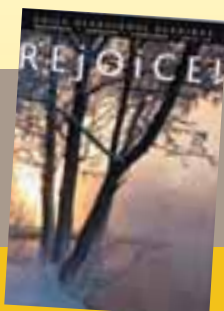


Newly translated book offers insight

A book written 100 years ago by a German Baptist minister provides insight into the relationship among Mennonite Brethren and German Baptist churches in German communities in what is now Ukraine. Johann E. Pritzkau's book, *German Baptists in South Russia*, is now available in English thanks to the translating efforts of retired educator Walter Regehr of Winnipeg, Man. The book is available from Kindred Productions, www.kindredproductions.com. —*CCMBC*

New Rejoice! editor appointed

Leslie Hawthorne Klinger, a Fuller Theological Seminary graduate and current Wheaton College instructor and freelance writer, is the new editor for *Rejoice!*, a daily devotional published quarterly by Kindred Productions and MennoMedia. About 600 copies of *Rejoice!* are distributed to 28 USMB churches that subscribe to the quarterly devotional.—*KP*



MDS closes Minot project

After working in the North Dakota Mouse River valley for more than two years, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) closed their project in Minot, ND, in December 2013. More than 100 homes in North Dakota's Mouse River valley benefited from the caring touch of MDS, one of the many faith-based groups that descended on the area following a devastating 2011 flood. Bible Fellowship Church, the USMB congregation in Minot, housed the 1,500-plus MDS volunteers. *MDS is a disaster relief agency of North American Mennonites.* —*MDS*

Books tells Carson story

A Culture of Call: The Story of the Carson Mennonite Brethren Church, written by Elaine Ewert Kroeker and published by



Tabor College, tells how this small church near Bingham Lake, Minn., became a place that called and commissioned young men and women to share their faith and serve others in the United States and around the world. Proceeds from the sale of the book benefit the Tabor College Carson Center for Global Education, a center that promotes mission, service and international education opportunities for students that was established thanks to an endowed gift from the Carson church following its closing in 2005.—*CL*

My Easter Prayer

By Paul Klassen

O God our Father and Christ Jesus our Savior, we come to your throne in awe.

How can we express the praise and adoration you deserve? Please accept our prayer this morning even though our words are so limited. Even though our comprehension of all you accomplished through the cross and the resurrection is so far from complete. We offer this prayer with great joy and overwhelming gratitude.

Lord God our Father, it was a morning like this that your presence invaded a sealed tomb where the cold, lifeless body of your beloved Son lay. What a moment of unspeakable joy when you leaned over your Son and breathed your life into him. What a holy reunion. What a joy-filled celebration of love, gladness and victory it must have been.

Outside that tomb the world slept, oblivious to the amazing miracle of love and life. But you wanted the world to know that the debt for sin had been paid in full, and that death had been swallowed up in victory. So you dispatched your holy messengers from heaven to roll back the stone. Now the world could look in and see and know that what Jesus had said was now accomplished.

It was a morning like this that the soldiers who guarded the tomb looked in and saw that it was empty and did not understand or believe. Even today people look at the Easter story—they view the empty tomb—and their minds are unconvinced and their hearts unbelieving and unmoved. Their understanding is darkened, and they are oblivious to the power and love of God.

Others approached the tomb that morning, their hearts broken with grief. They were numbed by disappointment. Their hopes and dreams, once so securely anchored in Jesus, were now utterly devastated. They came to grieve, to show their respect for the one they had come to love and trust.

But something happened at that tomb. It was not just the dawning of a new day; it was the dawning of a new understanding. An understanding that

- light has overcome the darkness.
- the power of God to give life has triumphed over the power of men to take life.
- the love of God is more powerful than the evil of this world.
- death no longer has the final word; God does.
- the wisdom of man cannot be compared to the all-surpassing wisdom of God.

So it was on a morning like this that a miracle of God began to change this world.

It was a morning like this when people began to know that the word of Christ is true and his promises are trustworthy.

It was a morning like this that Satan grasped with new clarity that his power over the world was broken and that his reign was doomed. His power to steal, kill and destroy was broken by the love of the Lamb and not by the cunning power of man.

It was a morning like this that the world began to comprehend the good news that the Lord God lives and reigns. That the penalty of sin is paid in full and forgiveness is now a gift that God offers through Jesus Christ. That we live with hope in a world where death is still a raw reality. We live with confidence because our victorious Lord and Savior now lives within us. We more fully grasp the height and depth of the love of God. People who are captive to sin and broken by its destructive power can be set free by the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

It is on a morning like this that we gather to worship and adore you for your love demonstrated on the cross and your power made known through the resurrection. So today we sing our praise to you, our God and Savior.

We surrender our lives to the wisdom of your will.

We invite you into our spiritual deadness and brokenness that we might be made fully alive and well through Jesus Christ.

We commit ourselves anew to the mission of sharing the good news of Jesus with all people.

All glory, honor, praise and blessing be to you our God and Father, to you, Jesus, our Savior and our Lord, and to you, Spirit of the Living God, who has drawn us to the Savior.

Amen.

Paul Klassen served as pastor of Memorial Road MB Church in Edmond, Okla., for 29 years and prior to that served Emmanuel MB Church in Onida, S.D., for eight years. He retired from the pastorate in 2012 and is currently the chaplain at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) divisional office in Oklahoma City.

By Jean Janzen

ART, A WOODEN BOWL AND COMMUNITY

What creating art and building a
faith community have in common

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I received a small wooden bowl as a birthday gift last year. It is carved from the trunk of a manzanita bush, the hard wood polished into silkiness and marked by a hole in its side, probably where a branch had broken off. I think of art in worship and in the life of the congregation as something like this bowl.

A few years after our church, College Community Church Mennonite Brethren in Clovis, Calif., was established 51 years ago we constructed our current building. As a young congregation, we had decided that our house of worship should reflect our vision of who we were and who we hoped to become, by the grace of God. A central theme was the importance of fellowship and of member participation in all aspects of church life.

The essence of art

We persuaded the architect to plan a small round building that held us close but has also taught us that, like my wooden bowl, who we are as a church cannot be contained. Our worship, education and service must continually be poured out. This is the foundation of art in worship and the essence of art. It finds a shape and then gives itself to those who are open to receive it.

I was raised in a Mennonite church that was plain and unadorned. After all, our heritage emphasized simplicity. The Protestant Reformation stripped Europe's cathedrals of images and elaborate decoration. What mattered was the pulpit and the word spoken from an elevated place.

Yet as a child I sensed the power of beauty in nature, music and visual art. A persistent memory for me is the ritual of the Lord's Supper. As a young child, I watched a woman from the congregation remove the starched, white tablecloth that covered the elements and carefully fold it in one of those rare moments of silence. That movement felt sacred and much bigger than itself.

As a 12 year old, I remember distinctly the thrill of sitting in the chapel at Tabor College where my father was a student, the beautiful stained glass windows surrounding me and singing *Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee* under the direction of Herb Richert. I felt that what was deep within me was something large that connected to the beauty. That what is intimate can also be immense.

Art can find shape, beauty and be shared when our worship is guided by the church year. Led by our first full-time pastor, Werner Kroeker, we at College Community began observing the church year—the rich pattern of Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Advent before Christmas. This observance was expressed in art and in our worship planning and continues today.

We honored the artists among us by inviting them to offer their work as part of worship. The artists—some of them students at local colleges and other members with skills in arts and crafts—were asked to create paintings, sculpture and banners that illuminated the sanctuary. We have been blessed with such offerings now for five decades, and we continue to invite all members, children and youth to participate.

Our congregation has also viewed our worship planning as an art. The gifts of music by voices and instruments, dramatic readings, the stripping of the altar after Maundy Thursday meals, the flowering of the cross at Easter and the Scripture readings and sermons are an invitation to experience worship not only with our minds but with our senses.

Art and community

The making of art resembles the formation of Christian community in two ways. First, the process usually begins with the necessity of unknowing. If the artist thinks that she already knows what the poem or music or painting will look like, it probably won't be art. To get to the essence of the piece, one must be willing to be open to chaos.

Maybe this is akin to the Spirit brooding over the waters at creation. Out of darkness and uncertainty may come the glimmer of a pathway—a shape emerging, a color insisting on itself, a word, a phrase, the movement of the melody.

The congregation in times of chaos and uncertainty is also asked to be open to the moving of the Spirit. Sometimes within the borders of order and sometimes moving the borders. I think of the Beatitudes—being poor in spirit, mourning and hungering and thirsting for God.

The second requirement is to be patient in crafting. The novel, painting or song usually develops step-by-step and sometimes in a rush of inspiration. But then the revision follows, which can be a long process, honoring time to bring freshness back, to get closer to what is true. The sermon put aside, waiting for the prophetic, poetic word. The choir director choosing the music, the choir rehearsing, adjusting, listening to each other. The pieces of a quilt rearranged again. It is the revision required in our lives and as a congregation. It is the process and blessedness of becoming merciful, pure in heart and making peace.

Does the piece ever get finished? Do we? Not really. It will never be perfect, and it will never be the final word. The project is always in process. Artists often say that revisions could go on forever, and so they “abandon the work,” sometimes reluctantly, to begin the next piece. Our imperfect worship and congregational life is offered up in the same way; we are always in process.

Our congregation is now in the process of building a new sanctuary. Our round chapel will be used for baptisms, fellowship and small meetings. The new space, something like an oval, will give us more space, height and windows for light. We pray that we will grow in the Spirit and in numbers as we offer the mystery and wonder of God's love in worship, community and witness.

I will end by offering one of my poems (next page). This poem has a hole in its side, like the wooden bowl. It holds the recognition that each of us and the whole world has a hole in its side. There is the wound at the heart of everything, the longing for the other. And there is God's love at the heart of everything, inviting us. This is the glory of worship. This the light of our hope.

Poet Jean Janzen, Fresno, Calif., pictured left at College Community Church, has authored six collections of poetry, the most recent is *Paper House* published by Good Books in 2008, and has seen her poems appear in a variety of magazines including *The Christian Century*. She has published a book of essays, *Elements of Faithful Writing*, based on the Menno Simons lectures given at Bethel College, Newton, Kan., in 2003. Her memoir, *Entering the Wild*, was published in 2012 by Good Books.

Catechism

What is the definition of Glory?

It is the fire at the center of pain.

Where does it live?

Everywhere in this world.

Why does Glory exist?

To make us whole.

How does it work?

It draws us to the water.

What does water do?

It washes the pain.

Does the Glory die?

No, the fire cannot be put out.

Does the pain die?

No, because it is Love.

Can Love make us whole?

Yes, because the fire
and the water are one.

Jean Janzen

Celebrating our parents; mourning our losses

Father's Day and Mother's Day are not times of celebration for everyone. How can we mourn with those who weep?

I love being a dad, and my wife is a terrific mom. I deeply love my parents who are godly, loving, gracious and amazing people. I have never been abused or neglected. In fact, my childhood was quite the opposite. My parents nurtured me with a Christ-like love that has led me to conclude that it is time for Christians to rethink how we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day.

There is value in celebrating the good parental influences in our lives and for rejoicing in the exceptional honor of being a parent. But we have to understand that, much like Christmas and Resurrection Sunday, the world has commercialized these days for their own purposes, imbuing them with a certain kind of celebratory excess that best benefits card, candy and flower shops.

My frustration with the church's version of Mother's Day and Father's Day celebrations is that it is only that—a celebration. We miss out on an opportunity to care for those for whom these days are not celebratory. In fact, we often do significant damage to people, making them feel marginalized because it isn't a joyful day. Or worse, we push them away entirely from the body of Christ, which should be a source of their greatest comfort during their struggle.


There are many for whom this is the case in our churches, but there are three groups in particular with which we should be concerned:

■ **Those who have experienced abuse.** As a former youth pastor, I had to quickly figure out how to talk about love with students who only understood it as abuse or neglect. So many in our congregations come from homes where emotional and even physical violence is a part of their routine experience of their mother and/or father.

For these, celebrating the parent isn't a joyful event but one of hurt, fear and anger. In our celebration, we might contribute to or even amplify their negative experience. At the very least, we are most certainly adding a measure of confusion to their understanding of parental love.

■ **Those experiencing infertility.** My wife and I waited 14 years to conceive a child. When it finally did happen, we miscarried. I promise you that two of the most painful days of the church calendar were those when we celebrated those who were successful at the fundamental part of life where we were failures. I know it would





"We miss out on an opportunity to care for those for whom these days are not celebratory..."

never be said this way, but it is how we experienced it.

One friend tells of being asked to stand with all the men on Father's Day during church.

Then while they all remained standing, the fathers were asked to come to the front to be prayed

over and honored, leaving the child-

less men to stand where they were. He spoke of the church's celebration as a humiliating and painful event in his life.

■ **Those who have experienced death.** One of the most moving experiences for me on Mother's Day and Father's Day is to scroll through my Facebook updates and see the many friends, colleagues and acquaintances who are missing one or both of their parents on that particular day. For some, being the remaining parent means being recognized as both father and mother, roles they never wanted. Others are reminded of children who died out of turn, leaving them as a parent of a child they will never hug again this side of heaven. The days lack a particular celebratory note for these folks.

Mourning is the common experience for all three groups. Human beings are confronted with losses of significant proportions when they have been abused, when they are infertile and when they have experienced the death of a loved one. What we do as a church seems like pouring salt and lemon juice into the wound. This is especially sad when we could make some significant adjustments and provide a balm instead.

It is time for churches to respond with both lament and celebration. Romans 12:15 encourages us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to mourn with those who mourn. We prefer the celebration and rejoicing, but the mourning is just as essential.

Mourning reminds us of our common experience as broken and needy people who crave God's touch in our lives. Thomas Reynolds, in his book *Vulnerable Communion*, says we live with the cult of normalcy. This way of thinking convinces us that the normal world is happy and fun, whole and healthy and controlled and manageable, leaving us with a sense of invulnerability.

Sadly, it is an illusion. Reynolds reminds us that while there are moments of happiness, fun, wholeness, health, control and manageability, these are not the only—or perhaps even the primary—experiences of life. Our world is broken and so are we. In mourning with those who mourn, we remember our need for a God who redeems and reconciles all things unto himself.

We also need to learn to mourn as well as to rejoice because both drive us outside of ourselves and into the lives of others to whom we are joined in Christ. Romans 12:15 is preceded by Romans 12:3 and the words "do not think of yourself more highly than you ought," and Romans 12:10 which says, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."

In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul writes, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."

Paul then tells us to have the same attitude as Christ who became human, lived as a servant, died on the cross and then was exalted.

Over and over again in the New Testament, we are called to live for one another. This is in both the good and the bad of life.

Here are a couple of suggestions for how to live in both joy and mourning as we celebrate Mother's Day and Father's Day.

1. Name both realities and recognize joy and mourning exist in tension with one another and in the same room.
2. Make space for people to mourn honestly and repeatedly as necessary.
3. Allow for that mourning to be private, in silent prayer and reflection.
4. Allow for that mourning to be public, in the naming of family members deceased and lost.
5. Acknowledge the pain of childlessness, especially when it is not chosen. Pray prayers of lament. Read Scriptures of lament.
6. Use responsive readings to acknowledge both the joys and pains of the community. Make these readings commitments to pray for and journey with each other in all experiences.
7. Ask the kinds of people listed earlier to help you plan occasions when parents are honored and listen carefully to their input.

A final suggestion is to remember this before May. Save this and put it in a file for next year's Mother's and Father's Day events. We should celebrate, but let's not do so to the exclusion of those who mourn. Together we can be the church and the kind of people who care for one another.

Quentin P. Kinnison is assistant professor of Christian ministry at Fresno Pacific University and has over 20 years of experience in various ministry contexts. He and his wife, Cynthia, are raising Carissa, their daughter by adoption.

Revising Article 13 tops business agenda this summer

U.S. Mennonite Brethren gather in July for *Conexion* 2014

When U.S. Mennonite Brethren gather in Santa Clara, Calif., this July for the 2014 National Convention, much of the time they will sail familiar seas—hearing firsthand updates from USMB church planters and USMB partner ministry leaders, for example. And while executive director Ed Boschman is the first full-time USMB skipper to retire from ministry, there are customs associated with celebrating a retirement that will likely be followed during the convention.

But delegates will also navigate new waters—having the opportunity to approve changes to the Confession of Faith article on peacemaking, the first article to be revised since the confession became a national rather than a North American statement. The Confession of Faith, a theological document developed cooperatively by the Canadian and U.S. Mennonite Brethren conferences working as the General Conference, was significantly revised in 1999 in preparation for the divestiture of the bi-national General Conference in 2000.

The Board of Faith and Life (BFL) has been piloting USMB through the choppy seas of revising Article 13 to better reflect the various—and conflicting—viewpoints on peacemaking held by the USMB constituency. BFL began the revision process at a January 2013 study conference. Following the conference, individuals and congregations were invited to submit written comments and to voice their feedback at district convention discussions hosted by BFL members.

The national BFL also talked with Bible faculty members at Fresno Pacific University and Tabor College, the two USMB-affiliated colleges, Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary faculty, district BFLs and with members of the International Community of Mennonite Brethren, Menno-nite Central Committee and other Mennonites.

Larry Nikkel, BFL chair, commends the constituency on their involvement in the process. “I hope that everyone feels they have had more than ample opportunity to review and com-

ment,” he says in an email interview. “The communication interchanges have been clear in their passion and points but respectful. That is to be applauded.”

BFL published a preliminary recommendation in October 2013, and the board met last month to finalize its recommendation for Article 13: Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation. Prior to the March meeting, Nikkel said he did not anticipate that any “substantive” changes would be made to the preliminary recommendation.

“We don’t want people to be surprised when they see our final recommendation,” he says.

The final recommendation will be forwarded to churches and will be available online at www.usmb.org.

Revising Article 13 is only the first phase of a more extensive journey, says Nikkel. “Our broader goal is to create an environment in which the constituency can be re-engaged in addressing with the great passion of Jesus on issues of peace and justice,” says Nikkel, adding that the board will have begun looking for strategies for accomplishing this at its March meeting.

Delegates will conduct other business as well during the 2014 National Convention.

The *Conexion* 2014 booklet will provide delegates to the 2014 National Convention with written updates from USMB ministry partners and recommendations on which they will vote. In this photo, delegates to the 2012 National Convention follow along in their booklets during a business session.



Christian Leader

The North American MB Historical Commission is asking both USMB and Canadian Conference of MB Churches convention delegates to approve a revised Historical Commission memorandum of understanding.

Delegates will act on a recommendation and bylaw change brought by the Leadership Board that the USMB fiscal year shift to the calendar year, retroactive for 2014.

Delegates will elect members to the USMB Leadership Board and Board of Faith and Life as well as members of partner ministry boards including MB Foundation, MB Mission and the Historical Commission. Delegates will also be asked to affirm representatives to three inter-Mennonite agencies: Mennonite Disaster Service, Everence and Mennonite World Conference.

Convention sessions will include firsthand accounts from USMB ministries and partner agencies of how God is working in the U.S. and around the world. Typically these stories, particularly from Mission USA church planters, are a convention highlight.

"At every convention we celebrate what God is doing in our church plants and in our individual congregations," says Steve Schroeder, USMB Leadership Board chair. "It is a story we retell because God continues to work in new ways and we celebrate this. This is our opportunity to hear how God has worked among us in the last two years."

In addition to providing a platform for sharing stories of transformation, Schroeder says the 2014 convention will be an occasion for recognizing the years of service retiring executive director Boschman has given to USMB. "We will celebrate how God has used Ed among us," says Schroeder.

Boschman will address the delegates and guests Saturday morn-

ing, and Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, author and church planter, will be the keynote speaker Friday evening. Stetzer has written 15 books on church and mission, mostly recently *Transformational Groups: Creating a New Scorecard for Groups* with co-author Eric Geiger.

Stetzer's address Friday evening and the Saturday evening program are designed to be can't-miss events, says Boschman. Entertainer Pete McCleod is the featured guest Saturday for an evening of family-friendly humor, music and illusions.

The National Convention schedule includes two Saturday afternoon workshop slots. The workshops, presented by USMB pastors and ministry leaders, cover a variety of topics. A complete list is given online at www.usmb.org/conection-2014.

The National Convention, July 25-26, is the second of two events that comprise *Conection 2014*, as the USMB biennial gatherings are known. The National Pastors Conference, an event for USMB pastors and their spouses initiated in 2004 and preceding the convention, will be held July 24-25.

Stetzer is also the resource speaker for the pastors' gathering. He will speak twice and will answer questions during a third session. The National Pastors Conference also includes a one-hour workshop session. A new feature of the workshop time slot will be the opportunity for affinity group discussions, which will allow pastoral staff members with similar job responsibilities to network.

Conection 2014 is a three-day event, compared to a five-day gathering when the National Pastors Conference was first added to the program in 2004. The 2014 schedule has been streamlined to allow for a shorter stay and reduced costs for delegates and guests. The National Pastors Conference begins in the late afternoon July 24 and the National Convention begins at the same time the following day.

Delegates and guests can register online at www.usmb.org. Additional information about the events, lodging and area attractions is provided online.—Connie Faber



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Free clinic delivers more than basic medical services

Oklahoma church supports dream of providing holistic care

Hilary Nicholson had a simple dream: The pediatric nurse practitioner and member of Discovery Bible Fellowship (DBF), Collinsville, Okla., wanted to open her own children's clinic in Collinsville. But God had bigger plans.

"God took me on a detour," she says.

The result of that detour is Arubah Community Clinic, a nonprofit medical clinic in Collinsville that provides free medical services to those who don't have access to medical care.

The detour began with a roadblock. When Nicholson and her husband crunched the numbers to open the private practice she dreamed of, they laughed at the sheer impossibility of it. So Nicholson set that dream aside. Meanwhile, a friend challenged her to read *Crazy Love*, the popular book by Francis Chan.

"As I read that book, it was as if it was printed in black and white that I was to open a free medical clinic," she says.

"I laughed," she says. She had no knowledge of free clinics, and if it was impossible to open a for-profit clinic, how much more so a free clinic? Still, the nudge persisted. She asked a friend from DBF to pray with her about the idea, and "it exploded from there," she says.

Glenn Krispense, DBF's pastor of group life and justice ministries, walked with Nicholson through the 18-month process of researching, organizing and starting a free clinic. They sought and received help from ECHO, a national nonprofit that empowers churches and communities to establish clinics. Arubah Community Clinic opened its doors Nov. 10, 2011.

The name, "Arubah," is taken from a Hebrew word meaning "restoration to sound health," which accurately captures the vision for the clinic. Arubah aims to do much more than treat illness; mental, emotional and spiritual needs are just as important. "We look at the whole person," Krispense says.

Clients receive quality medical care for basic needs, including simple lab tests or x-rays. Those with major medical needs—a broken femur or complicated diagnosis, for example—are referred to an extensive and growing network of resources. But they also receive much more.

From the minute a client walks through the door of Arubah, that person is cared for and loved in a highly relational atmosphere. The goal is for a client to receive at least six different personal touches or conversations during a visit.

Volunteers serve as greeters and hosts to help with paperwork and make the wait time—which can be long—more

pleasant. In private rooms, each client is given an opportunity to be prayed for. Now some clients come not to see a doctor, but simply to pray with someone or just to talk.

"That's kind of why we exist, so we're OK with that,"

Krispense says.

In addition, Arubah offers a variety of services aimed at holistic health, such as Divorce Care classes and biblical counseling.

In August, Arubah hired Renae Bernard, MD, as medical director and continuity of care provider. But most of Arubah's services depend on a pool of volunteers, both medical and nonmedical.

Krispense estimates some eight or nine doctors and nurse practitioners serve as primary providers. In addition, they have a large base of volunteer nurses, plus those with more specialized skills, such as technicians or triage help. Nonmedical volunteers serve as greeters, prayer partners and in other capacities.

The need for a Christ-centered free clinic is great: The uninsured rate in Oklahoma is 16 percent, and even many of those with insurance can't afford adequate health care. Roughly 85 percent of Arubah's clients are working-class people with jobs. Too often, Krispense says, working families must choose between putting a meal on the table or paying the co-pay to take their child to the doctor. And he expects to see a rise in the need, even with the Affordable Health Care Act.



Arubah Community Clinic is open two evenings a week, and staff see anywhere from 50 to 125 patients each month.

But the need is deeper than statistics. Krispense says they see emotional and spiritual brokenness along with the physical needs of their clientele. "We want this to be a place that communicates the love of Christ in a very practical way," he says. "At the end of the day, we want to point them to a real source of true healing, true restoration, true hope."

That true healing, of course, is found in Jesus.

"Jesus has everything to do with a medical clinic," says Nicholson, Arubah's founder. "So many people are hurting mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically. They're hurting not because they're sick, but because they need Jesus."

Although Arubah is a ministry of DBF, organizationally it is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit. Krispense serves as president of Arubah's Board of directors, and Nicholson served as the first executive director.

"We wanted (Arubah) to be a much larger entity than just Discovery Bible," says Krispense. The founders recognized early on that the clinic could accomplish much more as a community ministry than as a church ministry. As a separate nonprofit, Arubah is able to draw upon a wider pool of volunteers and to seek funding outside the church.

Krispense says that at first, the community viewed Arubah with some skepticism: What kind of "riff-raff" would the clinic draw? But the clinic has quickly gained credibility in the community, earning an award as the top business in Collinsville within the first year.

Still, Arubah is dear to the heart of DBF. Nicholson says that if you ask any attender of DBF about Arubah, they would certainly claim it as a ministry of DBF.

From day one, DBF has supported Arubah through prayer.

"They are huge prayer partners for us," Nicholson says.

DBF supports Arubah financially through their budget, and many individuals from the church also give. Krispense adds that several of the church's small groups choose to serve at the clinic as a way to engage their faith.

Arubah has big dreams for the future. The clinic is currently open two evenings each week, seeing anywhere from 50 to 125 patients each month. And they want to expand that. With help from ECHO, Arubah just completed a three-year strategic plan that includes a vision to expand their hours significantly, to full-time Monday through Friday, with a paid staff.

Other plans for the future include expanded dental services, vision services and counseling. Beyond that, Nicholson says, she would like to see Arubah provide preventative and lifestyle services, such as a gym with fitness equipment or nutrition classes.

To lead through such growth, the clinic has hired their first paid executive director, Kara Fleege.

As for Nicholson's original dream, God didn't forget. In May 2013, she opened a children's health clinic in Collinsville. "You can't make this stuff up," she says with a touch of awe in her voice. "This is how faithful he is!"

For more on Arubah, visit www.arubahclinic.com/ —Myra Holmes



Discovery Bible Fellowship

Arubah Clinic hopes to expand its services and has hired its first executive director.

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Speaking the language

Churches make use of media and technology to reach current culture



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APRIL / MAY 2014

Decades ago, Mennonite Brethren in the U.S. chose to embrace a new language, English, in order to better connect with American culture.

The “language” of 21st-century America is technology. And once again USMB congregations are working toward fluency in order to reach this culture for Christ.

Christian Leader talked to a sampling of people who serve in the areas of media and technology on the staff of USMB congregations for a primer on speaking the language of media: Dale Best serves as communications director at Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif.; Mike Boock is administrative assistant and technology coordinator at Bible Fellowship Church, Rapid City, SD; Megan Tabangcora is website and social media director at Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.; Matt Ehresman is media director at First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.; and Collin Smith serves as creative communications director at The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.

Their job descriptions are wide-ranging, covering graphic design, audio-visual enhancements for worship services, website design and maintenance, email communications, social media and video storytelling.

They offer these tips for using media for ministry:

Recognize the necessity. While the message of the gospel is timeless, a plugged-in culture has come to expect information-packed websites and/or visual stimulation. First MB’s Ehresman says, “We don’t need to follow the business leaders, but we have to meet people where they are.”

This is especially true when it comes to reaching young people. Boock, of Bible Fellowship, points out: “The younger generation is in dire need of knowing Jesus Christ right now. They are plugged in somewhere; why not get them plugged into your church?”

Recognize the benefits. Media is more than a necessary evil; it has clear benefits for congregations willing to learn.

It brings people together: Laurelglen’s Tabangcora says resources such as an online database and Facebook have helped people connect to each other and to Laurelglen. “It’s a great place to be in community,” she says.

It increases participation: Boock, of Bible Fellowship, says one benefit of offering Sunday sermons online, both recorded and live-streamed, is that it allows folks to feel part of the service if they can’t be there in person. That’s not only important when

members are sick or hindered by winter roads but also has been a way for overseas missionaries to connect with the congregation.

It makes the congregation accessible: Many people turn to a website first to gather information on any business, product or church—so much so that a church without an online presence becomes virtually invisible. Having that online presence makes the church noticeable and available to guests.

It enhances worship: “Well-designed places make people feel more comfortable,” says Ehresman of First MB. A well-designed worship service, complete with excellent audio-visual enhancements or stage design, welcomes guests and sets the scene for a powerful worship experience.

It communicates more powerfully: Jesus knew the power of stories, often teaching through parables. Likewise, media can help tell a story in a more creative, powerful way. Ehresman compares watching a well-crafted video with simply reading the script; the video will engage more senses and capture the imagination.

It takes ministry beyond Sunday morning: Best, of Neighborhood Church, gives the example of a baptism testimony recorded on video. When that story is posted on the church's website and social media outlets, it can be shared to a much wider audience. Maybe, Best speculates, someone will view that story and be motivated to take the next step toward Jesus.

Focus on the message. As in other areas of ministry, it is possible to become so eager to be relevant that a church loses sight of what's important. Smith, of The Bridge in Bakersfield, says church leaders should think through who they want to reach and the message they wish to communicate. Then media can intentionally complement that vision and enhance the message. Consistency with vision is more important than looking “cool,” he says.

Start small. Of course, many congregations don't have the budget to

hire a staff person for media and technology. That's OK, say these tech staff. They recommend finding one area of media or technology to try and let it grow from there.

Find volunteers. Neighborhood's Best says a church should not necessarily view media and technology as something to staff. Like other areas of ministry, church leaders should be looking for those with gifts and passion in this area, then empower them to minister. “Equip them and train them, then set them loose and let them change the world,” Best says.

Seek out tutorials. While some of the tech staff the CL interviewed had specific training in media—Ehresman, for example, holds a master's degree in digital media—others were self-taught. Tabangcora, of Laurelglenn, says she often looks to the Internet to help her learn the next step and has received great help by asking others in the field. Many free resources are available.

Just do it. Just like learning a new language, investing in media can be intimidating. But Ehresman says that doing our best to bring people to Christ means trying new things. While it can be scary, he says, “The payoff is worth it.”

Smith, of The Bridge Bible Church, says that while other things may have a higher priority in a church's ministry, every church can do something. “Do what you can do,” he urges.

Thank those serving. Because media and technology people are behind the scenes, they are often overlooked until something goes wrong, Boock points out. But those same people put in long hours and pour themselves into enhancing the church's ministry. Thank them and support them. “They need your prayers,” Boock says.—Myra Holmes

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Hitting the play button

It may seem counterintuitive, but sometimes in life and in ministry we need to hit the “pause button” in order to get ahead. Pausing to ask what, how and why we are doing things can be exactly what we need in order to resume forward progress.

For Mission USA, that pause came toward the end of last year when the financial means to move our church planting vision forward became extremely limited. In order to display financial integrity, the USMB Leadership Board placed a short-term halt on all new church planting projects until the financial situation improved—a pause.

A recent C-Link article was understood by some in our national family to indicate that USMB/Mission USA may no longer be partnering financially in the starting of new churches and would instead be looking for other ways to serve our districts and churches. I regret that many in our constituency concluded that we were pausing for good in regards to church planting. That is simply not the case. In fact, and in conjunction with a clarifying February USMB news release indicating the same, I want to declare that we have already released the “pause button” and have hit the “play” button again for new church plants!

How did the pause button get released? USMB staff raised additional funds toward the end of 2013 that were recently released by the USMB Leadership Board for new church plant initiatives in 2014. This has been extremely rewarding news for me personally. Mission USA is now moving ahead full

steam to work with our district church planting boards and commissions to discern new potential planters and projects. In fact, we are already involved in and pressing forward with new projects for 2014 and 2015.

Church planting is such a vital piece of that which we do together as a USMB family of churches. I find it fulfilling to speak with dozens and dozens of our pastors and leaders who say that very same thing. We have a strong, collective passion to plant more churches in order to reach more people with the good news. Because it matters so much, some of our churches contribute to church planting above their regular USMB and district giving.

As I said earlier, a lack of financial means was the reason for our few-months long pause. It simply takes money to plant churches. Funds are needed to get a fledgling church off the ground, and arguably it’s some of the best money spent in God’s kingdom work. So if we want the church planting “play” button to stay on, we all need to support church planting with our resources.

I think it’s right and appropriate that I ask you to give to church planting. So I’m asking. Would you please help us continue forward with your own personal gifts and from your church’s collective resources? It’s an investment in eternity. We don’t know how much time remains before Jesus returns for us to reach people with the gospel, but it will be the “stop forever” button that is hit then, not the pause button.

One of the top five excuses for not attending church:

Church is unnecessary since private prayer and Bible study can be done without others.

Did YOU know?

Reality: The Bible says that believers must not keep apart from other believers (Heb. 10:24-25). Common beliefs are affirmed and ways to overcome problems are shared when we get together.

Las Vegas church plant holds grand opening

Friends of Jesus, the new USMB church plant in Las Vegas, Nev., led by Andy and Leah Basilio, held a grand opening January 26 that drew about 65 people. The Sunday afternoon launch included a worship service that packed out the congregation's new worship space and a fellowship meal at which a generous amount of Filipino/American food was served.

Among the special guests was Tom Mowery who is the landlord of the facility. "Tom is thrilled that a church is in this facility," says Don Morris, who as director of Mission USA also attended the opening. "Tom has been extremely helpful, working through a lot of City of Las Vegas issues in order for a church to be able to occupy the space located in this office complex."

Gary Wall, Pacific District Conference minister, preached on the story of Jesus healing a leper as told in Mark 1. Wall said that many living in Las Vegas likely see themselves as "unclean" just as the leper did. Wall concluded that Jesus desires to touch many people who feel like outcasts in Las Vegas through the ministries of Friends of Jesus.

Morris says the church plant's new facility just north of Sahara Avenue, a major artery, provides the church with a stable daily presence that is easily accessed by people in need. "This loving, gentle and service-minded congregation envisions a lively day-by-day ministry outreach, connecting with people through providing basic needs and clothing, helping people who have lost jobs and connecting face-to-face with people in the community," says Morris. "Friends of Jesus is serious about loving and serving."—*Mission USA news story*

Ana Torentino is the worship leader at Friends of Jesus, a new USMB church plant in Las Vegas, Nev. Her husband, Aris, is one of the pastors at this new church that is attracting many ethnicities, including Filipino.



Friends of Jesus

Fresno church plant hires pastor

Mountain View Community Church Sunnyside, a new USMB church plant initiated out of Mountain View Community Church (MVCC), both of which are located on the west side of Fresno, Calif., has hired a full-time pastor to lead this thriving, young congregation.

John Richardson began serving in February and is joined by his wife, Sarah, and their seven-month-old son, Dex.

Sunnyside has experienced a solid beginning since it was launched in September 2012 under the leadership of interns. The expectation is that with full-time pastoral leadership the church will experience even stronger growth and health. "We are thankful for the leaders that God has called into kingdom work and are praying for God to be glorified in and through his church at Sunnyside," says MVCC pastor Fred Leonard.

"It means a ton to me to be on board with the team at Sunnyside; great people and great community," says Richardson when asked about his new pastoral role. "I think the future is bright for Sunnyside—pun intended. We look forward to being God's kingdom in this area.

We strive to be an authentic, real and fun group of people who are in love with Jesus."

MVCC Sunnyside is located a few miles south of the main MVCC campus in a socially diverse area. While the church includes people of all ages and various ethnicities, a significant number of young singles and young married couples make up the majority of the congregation.

Mission USA director Don Morris recently attended a Sunnyside worship service. "I was very encouraged as I found the worship and singing to be vibrant and meaningful, the attendees engaged throughout the morning and John's message to be right on target. Sunnyside is headed in a very positive direction."

MVCC, Mission USA (USMB) and the Pacific District Conference support Sunnyside financially.—*Mission USA news story*



Mission USA



RJ Thesman

When life unravels, read Psalm 43

Although living with joy is something I desire, the fact is life often unravels and affects my joy. Throughout the last five years, I faced long-term unemployment, my mother's Alzheimer's diagnosis and personal health issues. None of the positive posters on Facebook helped.

I felt as if I lived in a cartoon where a cat played with a ball of yarn. Within seconds, that yarn lay in curlicue knots as the cat tangled herself in her own noose.

Within my unraveling life, all I could do was stare at the knotted mess. My controlled sphere no longer made sense, and nothing I tried would change the circumstances. How could I soothe my frazzled emotions and deal with my unraveled life? I found action points within Psalm 43.

1. Focus on God instead of the problem.

"Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! For you art the God of my strength; why have you rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Ps. 43:1-2, NAS).

God delivers me from oppression, such as the new level of rejection I face from Mom's Alzheimer's. When her memories of me fade, I need someone stronger than I to plead my case and vindicate me. As I focus on God and his strength, I think more positively and take baby steps toward accepting the next phase of Mom's illness.

2. Focus on the lesson instead of the pain.

"O send out your light and your truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling place" (Ps. 43:3, NAS).

God's light and truth lead me through the unraveling yarns of health issues. Even within pain, he

brings me to that place of utter peace, that inner holy of holies where I rest in his strength.

As I stay alert for his light and truth, God whispers the phrase of a song or directs me to a passage of Scripture. When I focus on the lesson rather than the pain, God teaches me more of what I need to know in my faith journey. His beacon of truth points me to some of the richer treasures of faith and trust. As I focus on the lesson God wants to teach me, my pain becomes the secondary focus and a bit easier to bear.

3. Focus on the future instead of the present.

"Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet again praise him, the help of my countenance and my God" (Ps. 43:5, NAS).

King David reminds me to stay in hope. I think of this important principle as, "Living in the Yet." To live in the yet, I focus on the future—when this present circumstance wears down, when I work through the grief, when I learn the lesson.

All the unravelings of life—these temporary afflictions—eventually end. Some last longer than others and test my perseverance. Some need extra amounts of God's power-filled grace. Some are blessedly brief. But all trials eventually end. As I live in the yet, I praise God that the end will indeed occur and then hopefully, my faith muscles will be stronger, my trust in him deeper.

No matter what unravels next, I'm grateful for Psalm 43 and determined to live in the yet.

RJ Thesman is an author, editor and certified Christian Lifecoach. She is the author of The Unraveling of Reverend G, a book about Alzheimer's, dementia and finding hope. Her website is: www.rjthesman.net.



Tim Neufeld

Words hurt, even on social media

The recent weekend retreat didn't end well for a group of urban teens. Coming home from their "mountain high" with 800 other Fresno, Calif., students, an inner-city youth group rode on a bus that experienced mechanical difficulties. Two things happened when the bus was quickly pulled over on a steep downhill grade. First, the driver misjudged the length of the turnout, and the bus lurched as it bounced into the hillside. Next, the cabin filled with smoke from overheating brakes. Frightened and confused, teens began to panic and opened the emergency exit. Fortunately there were no injuries, and the bus was not damaged.

While this in itself was a traumatic experience, the mechanical problems were not the primary reason the weekend was ruined. Further complicating the matter, a local news agency posted an inaccurate "breaking" report of the experience on their Facebook page.

The organization errantly reported that a "crash" was "caused when driver was distracted by unruly teens trying to open escape door while the bus was in motion." In a later post, the news agency said an "unruly teen trying to open an escape door distracted the driver and contributed to the wreck." This reporting was hearsay and falsely accused innocent teens of causing the "wreck."

But that still wasn't the worst part. The teens, able to follow along on Facebook in real-time, were upset that they were being blamed, but they were devastated when the comments on the post began to stream in.

Facebook readers were quick to judge, leaving a barrage of hurtful accusations. "It was the teens' fault." "He needs to pay for all the damage he caused." "...Snot nosed punk child!!!" "Bully." "He deserves extreme punishment." That's just a mild sampling. There were a lot more comments, many full of curses and condemnation.

Due to irresponsible reporting and hundreds of ensuing negative comments on social media, a group of urban teens was demoralized, stereotyped and falsely accused.

"What's the harm?" many might ask. The harm comes in this: These kids are from one of the toughest, at-risk neighborhoods in Fresno, and such treatment reinforces the negative view of life they already hold.

They don't have nice schools, well-stocked grocery stores or the latest movie theaters. They are at risk of joining gangs, becoming pregnant and dropping out of school. They don't have transportation, discretionary spending money or stable home environments.

However, I know these kids. They smile, they laugh, they sing. They dance, they create, they overcome. They surmount adversities that would cripple the average teenager. They are real heroes to me and undeserving of the criticism they received.

Negative words hurt adolescents who are continually bombarded by accusations and stereotypes. At such a formative stage of development, repetitive destructive messages tend to impair the identity of a teenager.

We need to use words that bless our youth, not bring them down. When we have the chance to encourage teens, especially those who have grown up hearing mostly curses and condemnations, let's resist the temptation to make pessimistic assumptions and work hard to counter negative influences with words of grace, hope, affirmation and love. That would be a noble and appropriate use of social media.

Tim Neufeld is associate professor of Contemporary Christian Ministries at Fresno Pacific University. He blogs about church and culture at www.timneufeld.blogs.com and can be followed on Facebook ([timothyneufeld](https://www.facebook.com/timothyneufeld)) and Twitter ([@timothyneufeld](https://twitter.com/timothyneufeld)).

USMB has a strong presence in Utah, the most religiously homogenous state in the Union, with 62 percent of the population reported to be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. USMB church planter Jason Quiring offers this reading list for people interested in learning more about the Mormon faith. *Unveiling Grace* by Lynn K. Wilder is the story of a Brigham Young University professor who left the LDS church and became a biblical Christian. *I Love Mormons* by David Rowe guides readers in knowing how to talk with their Mormon friends. *Understanding the Book of Mormon* and *Understanding your Mormon Neighbor* by former Mormon Ross Anderson are excellent resources on the Mormon faith and cultural identity.

re: Mormons

milestones

BAPTISM/MEMBERSHIP

Mark Dooley was baptized Jan. 5 at **Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

Kate Johnston was baptized Jan. 5 and received as a member of **Enid (Okla.) MB Church**. Jared Penner, Pete and Lori Streck and Katie Toews were also received as members.

Brady Godwin, Mindy Chamberlin, Wendy Starling, Brian Bott, Kyra Jensen, Micahlyn Hardy, Michael Bublick and Zachary Davis were baptized Jan. 26 at **South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah**.

Keith Jochim and John and Jolene Steen were received Jan. 19 as members of **Garden Park Church, Denver, Colo.**

Brielle Lund and Kristen Harris were baptized Feb. 2 at **Parkview MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.** Jeremy and Hannah Stone were received as members.

Alan and Robin Butterfield were baptized Jan. 5 and received as members of **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church**. Bill and Jan Black, Ronald and Esther Melendrez and Gwen Nikkel were received as members.

CELEBRATIONS

Garden Valley Church, Garden City, Kan., held a mortgage burning celebration March 9 for their family center. The celebration was followed by a catered meal and sharing.

Greenhaven Neighborhood Church, Sacramento, Calif., formerly Florin Community, will celebrate 50 years June 1. Services begin at 10:30, followed by a meal. For more information, see www.greenhaven.org.

WORKERS

Scott and Heidi Goossen have stepped down as part of the church planting team for **The Green-House, Saratoga Springs, Utah**, as of Feb. 28.

Grace Community Church, Sanger, Calif., held a retirement celebration Feb. 23 for Baltazar Garcia, pastor of the Spanish language congregation. He had served at GCC for seven years. Lynn Kauffman now leads the Spanish language congregation and serves as associate pastor of GCC alongside lead pastor Sam Estes.

Ron Penner, pastor at **Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church**, has announced his retirement, effective at the end of summer 2014. Penner and his wife, Fran, have served in ministry and missions for over 40 years.

John Richardson was welcomed Feb. 16 as the new pastor at **Mountain View Community Church—Sunnyside (Fresno, Calif.)**.

Kyle Goings has accepted the call as youth pastor at **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**

Timothy Conner has accepted the call as interim lead pastor at **Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan.**

Will Peterson is the new fulltime associate pastor at **Faith Bible Church, Lawton, Okla.**

Richard Calam has joined the elder leadership team at **Good News Christian Fellowship, Marion, Kan.**, and will assist with leadership responsibilities during the interim between pastors.

Kirk Zweigle has begun a one-year apprenticeship at **The Heart, Tulsa, Okla.**

Brent Sawatzky has resigned as youth pastor at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church**. He is attending seminary at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary.

Mike Mathes was installed Feb. 2 as pastor at **Boone (NC) MB Church**.

Jon Fiester is the new youth leader at **Bible Fellowship Church, Rapid City, SD**.

DEATHS

Correction: In the February/March issue, Pauline Kroeker Elrich of Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., was incorrectly listed as Pauline Kroeker.

Bergman, Alvina, Corn, Okla., member of Corn MB Church, Oct. 10, 1920—March 3, 2014. Parents: J.J. and Minnie (Hiebert) Regier. Spouse: J.R. Bergman, deceased. Daughter: Kaylin Penner; three grandchildren; six great-grandchildren.

Ediger, Alma, Enid, Okla., member of Enid MB Church, Oct. 16, 1925—Feb. 5, 2014. Parents: George and Eva (Janzen) Kroeker. Spouse: Dan Ediger. Children: Karen Sawatzky, Rhonda Isaacs, Roger; seven grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Epp, Rachel, Hillsboro, Kan., of Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Jan. 29, 1923—Jan. 30, 2014. Parents: George and Lena Koch. Spouse: Ernest Epp, deceased. Children: Mary Ann, John; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.

Franz, Archie P., Corn, Okla., member of Corn MB Church, Feb. 17, 1925—Jan. 18, 2014. Parents: Henry and Lizzie Franz. Spouse: Genevieve Sallaska, deceased; Joan Schmidt. Children: Rita Williams, Lori Kliever, Tim Franz, Phil Schmidt, Richard Schmidt, Russell Schmidt; 22 grandchildren; 23 great-grandchildren.

Hett, Willard W., Hillsboro, Kan., member of Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, May 1, 1939—Feb. 3, 2014. Parents: Ron and Ruby (Just) Hett. Spouse: Alvina Brandt, deceased. Children: Alan, Donald, Barbara, Neil.

Film festival celebrates 20th

Christian Youth Film Festival marked 20 years of encouraging teens to express their faith through film March 9. The ministry has roots in Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.; Heritage youth pastor Joe Brown is co-founder and director. "We celebrate, encourage and equip young people to tell stories of faith through making movies," says Brown. "Nothing but good comes of it." Youth groups create short films that reflect a Christian worldview. Industry professionals judge the films, and the finalists are screened during the annual festival and awards ceremony. The event has the feel of a big Hollywood awards ceremony, with limousines, paparazzi and red carpet. Participation in the festival has grown to include entries from six states, Mexico and Canada. Organizers have added a college-age division and a two-day film camp that further equips budding filmmakers, and they dream about taking the camp and the festival to other locations. This year's 20th celebration included showings of entries from past years, celebrity guests, alumni emcees and a time for co-founders to reminisce. For more on CYFF, visit www.ChristianYouthFilmFestival.org.



Walking friends

A ministry at Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla., invites women from the neighborhood to walk in the church gym on Saturday mornings. MRMBC women and the church's Outreach Team initiated the effort last spring by walking the neighborhood and inviting women within about a half-mile radius of the church property. In addition to the health benefits, the objective of the outreach is to "get acquainted with some of our neighbors, do a lot of listening to our new friends as we walk and share our love for the Lord in an encouraging and loving way," according to a MRMBC bulletin.

Learning together

"Learning Communities" at Trailhead Church, Centennial, Colo., are one way the congregation is encouraging attendees to learn and grow together. Over the course of a few months, participants read an assigned book and Scriptures on a given topic and discuss the readings online. A gathering at the end of the time includes a meal and group discussion. The structure is designed to allow the group to dig into a topic in greater depth without demanding too much time from busy families. The congregation's first Learning Community tackled the topic of Christian community, with a dinner gathering scheduled for April 11.

Peters, Henry Daniel, Corn, Okla., member of Corn MB Church, Dec. 25, 1919—Feb. 23, 2014. Parents: David C. and Helena (Bartel) Peters. Spouse: Helen Reimer, deceased. Children: Bennet, Gordon, Jonathan; eight grandchildren; one sister.

Regier, Leland J., Buhler, Kan., member of Buhler MB Church, May 2, 1933—Feb. 5, 2014. Parents: Jacob L. and Ida (Ratzlaff) Regier. Spouse: Jane Holmes. Children: Steve, Tom, James; five grandchildren.

Suderman, Orval, Hillsboro, Kan., member of Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Nov. 8, 1925—Jan. 25, 2014. Parents: Dietrich W. and Justina (Loewen) Suderman. Spouse: Rosella Kasper. Children: Kay Klassen, Dean, Gail Dyck; 10 grandchildren.

Wiebe, Rubena, Hillsboro, Kan., member of Hillsboro MB Church, Nov. 3, 1923—Feb. 13, 2014. Parents: Bernhard and Margaret (Jantzen) Wiens (Pauls). Spouse: Vernon, deceased. Children: Rose Haury, Margaret, Hank, Rachel Easter, Kathy Loewen, Kakim and Karla Kunantaev; 15 grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.

Wiens, John, Zaporozhye, Ukraine, MB Mission worker in Ukraine, Oct. 7, 1944—Jan. 14, 2014. Parents: Jacob and Helen Wiens. Spouse: Evelyn Thiessen. Children: Andrea, Kenton, Carmen.

reaching in

DISCIPLESHIP

Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church is planning a family-friendly Easter experience April 17. "Walk with Jesus" will feature five stations depicting the excitement surrounding Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem, the significance of the Last Supper, the darkness of Gethsemane, the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross and the joy of his resurrection.

"Transitions" is an ongoing class at **South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah**, designed as a starting point for those who are examining leaving their Latter-day Saints roots and who are seeking to understand a new culture of biblical Christianity. The class includes group discussions and video content on the cultural, doctrinal and theological differences.

Discovery Bible Church, Collinsville, Okla., offered a seminar March 9 on "Raising Successful Teens in Suburbia," with national speaker Lisette Fraser.

Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla., offered a weekly class this winter called "The Constitution Is the Solution."

In January, young adults from **Corn (Okla.) MB Church** visited the high school youth group to share what they wished they'd have known and to field questions.

FELLOWSHIP

South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah, hosted a "Spring Fling" concert March 28 for over 1,000 students from the Salt Lake area. After the concert, students were bused to an activity center for unlimited pizza and soda, dodge ball, basketball, inflatables, ice skating and more.

A Jan. 10 senior's luncheon at **North Fresno (Calif.) MB Church** featured Ray Duey, a chef who specializes in the art of fruit and vegetable carving.

Men from **Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan.**, held an "advance" Jan. 10-11, featuring a program on accountability, a chili cook-off, shooting sports and a service project.

The deacons at **Corn (Okla.) MB Church** invited senior singles to a dinner March 9.

Boone (NC) MB Church held a CD release party for the first release from The Junaluska Gospel Choir, the church choir, March 2. The CD is named "Rough Side of the Mountain."

North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., hosted their annual dinner for those with special needs and their families, "Your Night to Shine," April 5.

Women from **Lincoln Glen Church, San Jose, Calif.**, went on a retreat March 21-23.

Seventeen youth from **Grace Community Church, Sanger, Calif.**, attended a winter camp at Sugar Pine Christian Campground Jan. 17-20. Three of the youth made first-time commitments to Christ.

Youth from **Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb.**, gathered March 9 for karaoke, pizza and ping-pong.

Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., held an all-church birthday celebration with an Olympics theme, called "Elympics," March 9.

"When Wallflowers Dance" was the theme of a Feb. 28-March 1 retreat for women from **Valleyview Bible Church, Cimarron, Kan.** The theme was based on the book of the same title by Angela Thomas.

Women from **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church** held a dinner event called "My Funny Valentine" Feb. 13.

"Fingerprints in Chocolate" was the theme for a Feb. 17 women's event at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**

South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah, held a daddy/daughter dance Feb. 21. The formal evening included dinner, dancing, crafts and a photo opportunity.

The Amor y Fe congregation of **Butler MB Church, Fresno, Calif.**, hosted a "Gala Dinner" for women Feb. 15.

Men from **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** held a wild game supper and pig roast Jan. 18. A game warden from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation provided the program. Fairview women held a "soup and swap" event Jan. 20; participants brought gently used "treasures" to exchange.

Youth from **North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan.**, delivered candygrams during the morning of Feb. 9 as a fundraiser for an upcoming mission trip.

reaching out

LOCALLY

Volunteers from **Shadow Mountain Community Church**, South Jordan, Utah, served disadvantaged children and refugees March 17 through a local ministry by doing crafts, reading and serving a meal.

"The Café at the Glen," a ministry of **Lincoln Glen Church, San Jose, Calif.**, offers latte and live music every Saturday evening.

Volunteers from **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, delivered cookies Feb. 11 to neighbors within walking distance of the church.

North Park Community Church, Eugene, Ore., organized a food drive in early March, then packed and distributed breakfasts and lunches for school children in need March 18. "Feed Hope" is a community-wide effort initiated by North Park. In February, attendees wrote Valentine's notes of encouragement for teachers of their nearby elementary school.

North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., has started a food pantry for those in need within the church family as well as neighbors and friends.

Volunteers from **Bible Fellowship Church, Minot, ND**, help run Good News Club, a Bible club for kids, at a local school each week.

Garden Valley Church, Garden City, Kan., sent Valentine's Day care packages to college students in February.

GLOBALLY

Laurelglenn Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., plans to send mission teams to the Navajo Nation, Kenya and India this summer.

Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla., sent a team of 24 students and adults on a short-term mission trip to Boston, Mass., March 16-21.

CLEARINGHOUSE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals for scholarly papers, creative writing presentations and panel discussions are sought for the seventh conference on Mennonite writing, *Menno-nite/s Writing VII: Movement, Transformation, Place*, March 12-15, 2015, Fresno Pacific University. The conference welcomes a wide variety of voices and seeks to create a site of learning and inspiration. For submission details and information: www.fresno.edu/mennos-writing.

CELEBRATIONS

Greenhaven Neighborhood Church, formerly Florin Community, Sacramento, Calif., will be celebrating 50 years of service to our Lord in 2014. Yes, it is hard to believe that 50 years have passed since we began services. The Lord has been good; the Lord is good. He has provided: pastors faithful and willing to proclaim God's Word, worshipers with open hearts and hands willing to serve and facilities to accommodate and minister within our community. We invite all who have previously attended our services to participate with us June 1, 2014, and give thanks to God as we celebrate our Jubilee. Services begin at 10:30 a.m., with lunch following. For information, contact us at Greenhaven Neighborhood Church, 630 Ark Way, Sacramento, CA 95831; (916) 422-8253; office@greenhaven.org; www.greenhaven.org

DEVOTIONAL PUBLISHED

Stairway Discipleship has published Albert Epp's new book of 365 devotionals, *How to Launch Your Day*. This is no ordinary book! It's refreshingly inspirational and motivational, aimed at cultivating spiritual growth. Based on choice Bible passages, creatively illustrated from 50 years of pastoral work, it's designed to hold your interest. Price: \$13.99. You can order by Internet ajepp@att.net or by phone (661) 834-8107. You can pay by check or Visa and Mastercard.

LOCAL CHURCH JOB OPENINGS

Pastor of Care Ministries: Shafter (Calif.) MB Church is seeking a part-time pastor of care ministries. For additional information, please contact Patrick Coyle at pcoyled@shaftermb.org or call the church office at 661-746-4969.

Senior Pastor: Kingsburg MB Church is seeking a full-time senior pastor for a congregation of approximately 150. Inquiries or resumes should be sent to Kingsburg MB Church, 1301 Stroud Ave, Kingsburg, CA 93631 or emailed to kmbc-search@gmail.com

Lead Pastor: Ebenfeld MB Church in rural Hillsboro, Kan., is seeking a full-time lead pastor for our congregation of approximately 300. Inquiries or resumes should be sent to Ebenfeld MB Church, 107 N. Main, Hillsboro, KS 67063 or emailed to ebenfeldpastorsearch@gmail.com

Transitional Pastor: College Community Church Mennonite Brethren, Clovis, Calif., seeks a full-

time transitional pastor to begin summer 2014. Primary duties include preaching, administrative leadership and helping the congregation move through transitions in leadership and new facilities. Contact Kevin Enns-Rempel at kevin.enns.rempel@gmail.com for more information or to express interest.

Senior Pastor: Grace Bible Church, Gettysburg, SD, is searching for a full-time pastor with leadership qualities, who can relate well with young married/single adults. Our evangelical church is very social and outgoing with approximately 110 members. Send resumes and inquiries to Ray VanBockel c/o Grace Bible Church, 310 South Broadway, Gettysburg, SD 57442.

AGENCY JOB OPENINGS

Planned Giving Advisor: MB Foundation is accepting applications for planned giving advisor. This person, based out of the Fresno, Calif., office, will represent MBF programs and services to individuals and ministries throughout the West Coast. MBF is a service agency of the U.S. Conference of MB Churches. Salary commensurate with training and experience. If interested, send a letter and resume to: Jon C. Wiebe, President/CEO, MB Foundation, PO Box 220, Hillsboro KS 67063 (jwiebe@mbfoundation.com)

CONCERT

West Coast Mennonite Men's Chorus final 2014 concert, May 4, Calvary Chapel, Visalia, CA, 6 p.m.

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