

CL

CHRISTIAN
LEADER

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Article 13
revised

Conection 2014



from the editor



“

We can't do much about conflicts in the Middle East or Ukraine or even Ferguson. But we can readily take responsibility for being peacemakers in every relationship we have.

”

As I write this, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has released a video showing the brutal beheading of American journalist James W. Foley, Israel and Palestine are firing rockets and mortar rounds at one another, Russia and the Ukraine continue to wage an undeclared war and Libya could be headed toward a prolonged civil war. Here in the United States, violence has erupted in Ferguson, Mo., following the shooting death of a young black man.

By the time you read this, new conflicts may have erupted around the globe and here at home. The struggles that were breaking news in August may have dropped off the radar, but that doesn't mean the conflicts have been resolved. Life continues to be violent in too many places in our world.

Many of these violent situations are beyond our borders and out of our control. Yet the recently approved revision to Article 13 of our USMB Confession of Faith reminds us that there are conflicts that we can influence: “We actively pursue peace and reconciliation in all relationships by following Christ's example and his command to love God, neighbors and even enemies. We strive to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation in families, churches, communities, in our work and throughout the world.”

You and I probably don't have to think back very far to remember the last time we had a conflict with someone in our families, at work or even at church. Our stated commitment as U.S. Mennonite Brethren is that we will actively chase after peace and reconciliation when we disagree with someone. We can't do much about conflicts in the Middle East or Ukraine or even Ferguson. But we can readily take responsibility for being peacemakers in every relationship we have. If we as Mennonite Brethren were to do that, we would truly be a shining city on a hill.



Connie Faber
Editor

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Center insert — *Mennonite World Conference*

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

www.usmb.org

byTheBook (The Psalms)



James Suderman

More and more people today are approaching worship as consumers. George Barna's research shows that most Americans expect worship to satisfy or please themselves, not to honor or please God. "Amazingly, few worship-service regulars argue that worship is something they do primarily for God," says Barna. "A substantially larger percentage of attenders claim that attending worship services is something they do for personal benefit and pleasure."

In other words, we often come to church to "get blessed" by God rather than to focus our praise, adoration and attention on the One who alone is worthy of worship. The writer of Psalm 95 brings us back to the "main thing" of worship.

First, we are called to worship. "O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to him with psalms" (Ps. 95: 1-2, NASB).

Four times in the opening verses we read, "Let us...." The psalmist states that worship is designed to be congregational, not merely individual. There is a benefit to corporate worship that cannot be found elsewhere.

Next, we have cause to worship (vv. 3-6). The sovereignty of God is given as a basis for our worship. Verse 3 says, "For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods." God is the sovereign Lord of the whole creation. There is absolutely nothing that happens in the universe that is outside of God's influence and authority. As such, we should worship him in the reality of who he is.

Finally, we are given a caution in worship (vv. 7-11). "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, 'When your fathers tested me, they tried me, though they had seen my work'" (vv 8-9, NASB).

Psalm 95 ends with a reminder of some disappointing episodes in Israel's history. Meribah and Massah are two places that the children of Israel hardened their hearts and even chose to question and rebel against the Lord. God asks in verse 11, which will it be, my wrath or my rest? We either give attention to the voice of the Lord or we harden our hearts to his voice.

Are you obediently listening to God's Word or stubbornly hardening your heart? Perhaps the best way to gauge your heart is to examine your attitudes in the area of worship. Whether slow or fast, modern or vintage, keep the focus where it belongs—exclusively on God.

Pastor and author Sam Storms sums it up well: "If you come to worship for any reason other than the joy and pleasure and satisfaction that are to be found in God, you dishonor him God's greatest delight is your delight in him."

James Suderman is pastor of New Hopedale Mennonite Church in Meno, Okla.

"For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods"
Psalm 95:3

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See story on page 21

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Steve Schroeder

The example of Ed Boschman

When we re-keyed our church building recently, I was given a key with a unique number stamped on it. I'm guessing someone did that using a hammer and a steel punch. This is the picture Paul gave young Timothy when he told him not to let anyone look down on his youthfulness but rather he was to be an example to others in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Tim. 4:12). An example like this leaves a permanent "mark" or impression on the other person.

That's what happened to me when I first met Ed Boschman. He was my youth pastor in San Jose, Calif., and during our few years together there he left a permanent impression on my life. He made ministry look fun. He played guitar, and he taught God's Word with enthusiasm. He loved the church, and he loved his job. God used his inspiration to draw me into full-time ministry. I left for college wanting to be just like Ed!

While it didn't take long for me to realize that God wasn't calling me to be another Ed, the "mark" Ed left on my life continues to this day. Ed always believed in me and affirmed leadership gifts in me. "You can do it" has been his attitude toward me and toward the many others he has mentored.

Our USMB family of churches has been blessed by Ed's ministry for many years. In 1978 he left Lincoln Glen Church in San Jose to plant Laurelglen Bible Church in Bakersfield, Calif. After guiding that church through many stages of growth he followed God's call to serve as the lead pastor of Willow Park Church in Kelowna, BC. In 1996, Ed returned to the U.S. to be the director of Mission USA. He gave enthusiastic leadership to that for

six years before returning to Laurelglen as their executive pastor. In October of 2007, Ed accepted the call to be our USMB executive director. He served us faithfully in that role for nearly seven years until our convention in July when he completed his term in order to step toward retirement.

The imprint of Ed's life and his leadership has left its mark on many of us. He was a passionate leader and a visionary leader. He was continually working toward greater unity and synergy among all of our churches and denominational entities. Ed helped us articulate a common vision of "Partnering as one family to serve one Lord on one mission, for the transformation of individuals, families and communities."

Ed also cared for lost people and often told stories of how God was using him to reach people for Jesus. I appreciated Ed's transparency as a leader as well as his deep desire to see our tribe grow in health and vitality as Jesus followers. Relentlessly, Ed has traveled back and forth throughout our districts, attending countless meetings and speaking in churches, calling us to follow Christ with greater passion and unity.

I am very grateful to God for Ed. He has been a true gift of leadership to our family of churches and to me personally. Thankfully, during his retirement years, Ed will continue to leave his mark on the lives of some of our pastors through his ongoing coaching ministry. Thanks, Ed. You left a good "impression" on my life.

Steve Schroeder is the pastor of Parkview MB Church in Hillsboro, Kan., and chairs the USMB Leadership Board.

He made ministry look fun. He played guitar, and he taught God's Word with enthusiasm. He loved the church, and he loved his job. God used his inspiration to draw me into full-time ministry.



Wendell Loewen

Rethinking ministry success

Reflecting on 20 years of ministry and teaching experience, I recently concluded that if I started over in youth ministry, one of the things I would do is check my ego at the door.

I was the youth pastor of a tiny youth group in a small church, working essentially as a full-time volunteer. Nonetheless, I wanted growth because that's how ministry success is measured, right?

My desire to bust attendance records drove me to the local high school campus. I had lunch with my students and their friends, volunteered with Campus Life, a division of Youth for Christ, and partnered with the school's counselor to lead small groups for at-risk teens. I was doing all I could to meet new kids and draw them in.

This brought in the occasional, casual student who would stop by to check things out. There were new faces, but they would come and go. In the meantime, kids like Phil, Joel, Becky and Julie—my youth group regulars—stopped coming. It's ironic that while I was praying for and pursuing growth, the group was actually shrinking.

Confused and disappointed, I felt like David in so many of those lament psalms. "How long, Lord, must I wait for you to act? When will we finally see the attendance boom I've been pleading for?" Then I sensed a word from God: "I didn't call you to grow a program. I called you to love teens. Take care of the ones I've entrusted to you."

At that moment I realized that I'd been pursuing a selfish goal to feed my starving ego. And in an effort to win the masses and grow a program, I had abandoned the hearts I was called to love. I confused growth with success, and along the way I lost my ability to deeply influence young lives for Christ.

From that point on, I paid attention to the students God gave me. I listened to them—hearing their hearts—and prayed with them. I made sure to "waste" time with them—with no heavy spiritual agenda. But most importantly, I didn't use them as a way to get to their friends, and I stopped caring about the imaginary teens that weren't there every week.

Well, the youth group grew ... only a little. But I realized attendance wasn't all that mattered. While growth can be an indicator of ministry success, it is not success in and of itself. Lasting success in youth ministry is deep and quiet. It's realized when young people are being shaped into the image of Christ as they choose to follow Jesus in life. This view of youth ministry success doesn't stroke the ego. You can't count it and put it in some statistical report; it's much deeper and more profound.

This truth resonated with me again years later, leading another youth ministry in a church far away. We were growing—bursting at the seams and apparently successful. But one day I realized that my ministry had become more about management, programs and administration than deeply affecting young lives. Ironically, while I was running a youth program for 90 students, I was secretly longing for the days when I had only nine.

Wendell Loewen is the director of Ministry Quest, a mentoring and leadership program for high school students, and professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Tabor College. He is a member of Parkview MB Church in Hillsboro, Kan. This essay is taken from Loewen's current book project, If I Were Starting Ministry Over Again.

USMB hires consultant to lead review

The USMB Leadership Board (LB) has hired consultant George Bullard to lead a review of conference vision and structures. Bullard is president of The Columbia Partnership (TCP), a Christian ministry organization focusing on ministry vitality of leaders, congregations, denominations and parachurch organizations.

LB chair Steve Schroeder says the board views the retirement of executive director Ed Boschman as “a God-given opportunity to reevaluate where we are as a family of churches and to discern together where God is leading us.”

Bullard will meet with a broad cross-section of key USMB leaders in two gatherings this fall—in September and November. *The hope is that those meetings will result in specific, agreed-upon goals, which the LB will share broadly with the USMB constituency.* Schroeder urges the USMB family to join in prayer for unity, vision and wisdom for those fall gatherings.

“We expect that God will use this season to draw USMB leaders and agencies closer together as we meet, pray and discern together what God’s vision is for us going forward,” Schroeder says.

“We also expect to gain some clarity on our priorities and how we can partner with God in what he is doing in our USMB family. Furthermore, we’re expecting to have a clearer picture of how our USMB Leadership Board and national staff can better partner with our district ministers to serve our local churches and pastors.”

In addition to his work with TCP, Bullard is general secretary for the North American Baptist Fellowship and senior editor for TCP’s Leadership Series. He has provided in-depth consultation with more than 200 congregations and denominational organizations, helping with strategic planning, church growth, missional church and conflict management. His latest book is *FaithSoaring Churches*. For more, visit www.thecolumbiapartnership.org. —USMB



Historical Commission launches *new initiative*

The MB Historical Commission (MBHC) has launched a new funded initiative: the MB studies project grant, designed to support historical and theological research and publication on topics of interest to Mennonite Brethren globally. The commission made the announcement following their annual general meeting, held May 30-31 in Hillsboro, Kan.

This grant joins two other MBHC funded initiatives—the archival internship and the Katie Funk Wiebe research grant. Details are available on the MBHC website: www.mbhhistory.org. The annual meeting also included reflections from this year’s archival intern, Yoshio Fujii, and a tour of one of the first Mennonite Brethren meeting places in North America. The Commission works with a network of four archival centers in Hillsboro, Kan., Fresno, Calif., Winnipeg, Man., and Abbotsford, BC. —MBHC

National Youth Committee invites prayer

The National Youth Committee invites U.S. Mennonite Brethren to pray for Named 2015 the week of Oct. 5-11. They encourage individuals to pray during their personal prayer time and youth groups to pray during regular meetings. Specific prayer requests and more information will be available at www.Named2015.com. Named 2015 is the next National Youth Conference, to be held in Denver, Colo., in April. —NYC



ICOMB announces scholarship recipients

The International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) has announced the 2014-2015 recipients of the Global Scholarship Fund (GSF), established by ICOMB and MB Mission to assist in leadership development. Approximately \$35,000 was disbursed to 10 students from seven countries and to four schools in Congo, Angola and India. The purpose of the fund is to assist students and educational institutions from ICOMB member conferences located in the Global South and/or in emerging, small conferences of the Global North. In granting scholarships, ICOMB gives priority to students and schools in areas of the Mennonite Brethren world where there is less local funding available. The scholarship is funded from interest generated by endowments held at MB Foundation. MB Mission administers and transfers the funds on behalf of ICOMB. ICOMB is a global fellowship of Mennonite Brethren conferences; MB Mission is the global mission agency of North American Mennonite Brethren. —ICOMB

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byTheNumbers

\$245,340

The amount a middle-income family with a child born in 2013 can expect to spend raising the child up to the age of 18.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, August 2013



5 minutes with...

STEVE HOPKINS

Steve Hopkins is an IRS collections manager who attends Salem MB Church in rural Bridgewater, SD. A long-time volunteer auctioneer for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Relief Sales, Hopkins took a bike ride in July that raised \$40,000 for MCC. He rode from Rock Valley, Iowa, to the Mississippi River in the week-long Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI).



Cheyenne Derksen

EAST CHAT

- 1** **How did you get started riding bike?**
I always liked riding bikes when I was a kid, but in college I gained weight and couldn't get 10 miles. I've lost 140 pounds in the last year and got back on the bike.
- 2** **What prompted your interest in RAGBRAI?**
It's been on my bucket list. When they announced that it was leaving from Rock Valley, just 20 miles from my office, I figured I'd ride a couple of days.
- 3** **Why do you call it your "Dam Ride?"**
Dave Klassen from the Twin Cities MCC Sale challenged me to make my ride a fundraiser for MCC. I decided to raise money for MCC's sand dams in Kenya. Later I learned that the ride ends at a dam on the Mississippi River that RAGBRAI calls "the best finish by a dam site."
- 4** **You ended up riding more than a couple of days.**
Yes, I committed to ride one day for every 300 bags of cement funded at \$10 each. But then my church gave me a very generous matching gift and challenged me to raise \$32,000. In the end people gave almost \$40,000—enough for three whole dams!
- 5** **Who donated?**
Four MCC Sale auctions collected matching gifts, and I put it out for all of my Facebook friends to share my blog with their friends.
- 6** **How was the ride?**
I just blogged and giggled and laughed the whole way. I was excited to ride the whole week and even more excited about the money we've raised doing it.

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

MWC Assembly registration opens

Registration is now open for Pennsylvania 2015, the 16th assembly of Mennonite World Conference, to be held July 21-26, 2015 in Harrisburg, Pa. MWC is a global fellowship of Anabaptists; the MWC global assembly is held once every six years and rotates between five continents.

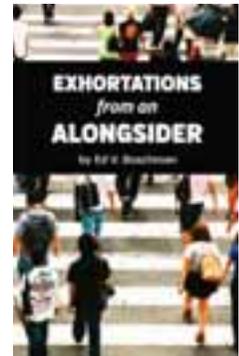
Assembly activities will include worship, presentations from MWC's four commissions, multicultural small groups, work-

shops, service opportunities, tours, sports activities, performances and exhibits. For more, visit mwc-cmm.org/pa2015.—MWC



Boschman releases book

Ed Boschman, who retired as USMB executive director in July, has published a collection of writings and poems from 40 years of ministry. *Exhortations from an Alongsider* includes pieces written for various publications, including *Christian Leader*. The book is available from Boschman for \$19.95 plus shipping. Contact him at evboschman@gmail.com



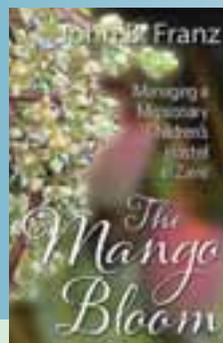
MB Foundation makes changes

MB Foundation, the stewardship ministry serving U.S. Mennonite Brethren, has recently hired additional staff and launched new services. Jeff Jorgenson joined the staff in May and is the ministry's first director of operations. In June, MB Foundation unveiled a redesigned website (www.mbfoundation.com) that offers simple access to their five services: planned giving services, fund management, championing biblical stewardship, investment certificates and the loan program. In August, the ministry began offering current donors the ability to conduct their giving activity online. This new service follows a software conversion and implementation process that had been in the works for 24 months.—MBF

Elizondo concludes service

Jose Elizondo will conclude his service Sept. 30 as associate district minister of the Pacific District Conference. "We honor and affirm his ministry and expect that he will continue to be used by God in a variety of ways in our district," says Bud Klassen, district moderator, in an email announcement to district churches. Elizondo has served for 16 years, working especially with the district's Hispanic congregations.—PDC

Franz releases memoir



The Mango Bloom: Managing a Missionary Children's Hostel in Zaire is a new book written by John B. Franz and published by Outskirts Press that describes life and work in Africa in the 1970s and explores the formation of "third culture kids." Franz is a member of North Fresno (Calif.) MB Church. The book is available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.



**Centered
in Christ**
in the
midst of
**a social
world**

How do we pull ourselves away from life online and regain a life fixed on Christ?

As an executive she was smart, practical and successful. As a mother, she was caring, loving and kind. As an entrepreneur she was energetic and passionate. She was also a social media addict.

She had called into a radio show to ask about the necessity of checking email and social media while on vacation. “Isn’t it okay if I just quickly sneak it in while we are in the car driving someplace?”

The next caller voiced a similar concern. He mentioned that it was just too hard to go on vacation and not check email. He found that he was more stressed if he didn’t check email than if he did, so he wanted some affirmation that it was okay to keep checking.

Behind these callers’ questions, even behind their desires to be doing the right thing, was a need to justify something that deep down they knew was wrong. In their questions you could almost hear the pain of their families’ voices that longed to spend significant time with them, to connect with them, to play with them, to even—just for a moment—be seen as more important than email.

And yet they couldn’t pull themselves away. They wanted to feel justified in their importance and worldly worth.

Jesus shared a story once about a man who wanted to justify himself:

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have’ (Luke 10:30-35).

Luke tells us that the lawyer was ashamed when he saw that the neighbor was a despised Samaritan. He also saw that his need

for self-justification had just been denied. Jesus wouldn't affirm that desire.

We've made it a priority in our own lives to often seek after this self-justification. The need to check email, even on our days off. The need to keep building our social media statistics, to have more followers, more influence and more popularity. The need to show the world that we are right in what we do.

And somewhere along the way we've lost what it means to be justified in Christ. We've traded our status and security in Christ with the possibility of going viral. It's time to regain our focus. Consider these three ways to regain a life centered in Christ:

1. Reclaim the art of Sabbath. If you refuse to find a consistent time away because work is too important, I can almost guarantee that others find you negative, judgmental, tired, angry and gossipy. God has intentionally given us time every week to remind ourselves that we only work through the power of his Spirit.

As a pastor, Sabbath for me runs from 5 p.m. Thursdays to 8 a.m. Saturdays. Every Sabbath day I repeat: "I am not defined by what I can make or do or produce, but by who I am in Christ." I recite this often throughout the day, especially when I am tempted to check email, listen to voicemail or get on my computer.

When we don't have an intentional rhythm, we struggle spiritually. When we fail to integrate this into the regular practice of our lives, we end up struggling with low spiritual vitality. It is important for us to regain the art of our Sabbath—intentional time to find rest, comfort and solace in Christ.

In his book, *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders*, Reggie McNeal challenges us well when he says: "God instituted Sabbath to give people rest, which involves more dimensions than just physical relief. In biblical terms the day is designed to disrupt life's usual routines to allow people the opportunity to remember and to reflect. We do well to remember that our lives are being lived against the backdrop of eternity, that we are created by God to enjoy him."

McNeal continues, "Absent the practice of Sabbath in our lives, we wind up captured by the temporal, immediate concerns. We lose our way, our perspective and our center. We forget who we are and why we are here. The loss of Sabbath is one of the major failings of contemporary church life in North America. We are substituting frenetic activity for genuine spiritual vitality."

2. Plan intentional downtime. If the Sabbath is to be a part of our weekly rhythm, we also need to incorporate more intentional times away from work, technology and the demands of life. We all struggle with that need to unplug and recharge while away.

I blog regularly and early on I could justify posting all the time. "I'm trying to build readers," I'd say to my wife and

myself, and yet after "working vacations," I never once came home recharged and refreshed like I had hoped.

We need to be intentional about our time away. We see it modeled in both the Jewish calendar and the life of Jesus. Jesus is purposeful and passionate but never hurried. He relaxes, refreshes and recharges on a consistent basis. He rises early in the morning for prayer, spends time relaxing with his disciples and travels to Jerusalem for significant holy moments throughout the year.

I've begun calling this "holy wasted time," an extended period of time where our only goal is to relax, refresh, recharge and rebuild key relationships. We need to be intentional as we plan our vacations. Vacations are more than just time away from the office. It is a way to connect in more meaningful ways with our Creator, our families and within ourselves.

3. Engage in intentional life-giving activities. This is especially important for leaders, church staff and ministry volunteers. Ministry is hard. It's time consuming and draining. That's why it is especially important to regularly do something—preferably something that doesn't involve electronics—that gives you life. Go hiking, camping or fishing. Spend time outdoors. Put a puzzle together, build something or fly model airplanes. *What* we do isn't as important as *that* we do.

If we don't have time to invest in ourselves, I'm fairly convinced that we don't have time to invest in others in any meaningful way. Doing something that brings us joy and delight is a simple way to acknowledge the special and unique way that God has created each of us. And when incorporated into the rhythm of Sabbath and holy wasted time, this is a chance to worship God in deeper and more meaningful ways.

The two radio show callers serve as a great reminder to all of us: Don't let the technology we use to enhance our lives serve as an idol or tool of distraction. Maybe the struggle isn't with email but with posting so many vacation pictures to Facebook that you actually forget to enjoy vacation. Perhaps you struggle with the need to never miss what is happening in someone else's life while missing what God is trying to say in yours.

Maybe what we all notice and fear is that our great common struggle is that we don't really know ourselves. And in all honesty, we are too afraid to understand ourselves, so we fill our lives with external distractions. The greatest act of courage then is not outward, but inward and upward, to reclaim the titles and status that come with a life in Christ.

Justin Hiebert is a husband, father and pastor. He does his best to follow Jesus with his church in the heart of Denver, is a doctoral student at Bethel Seminary and loves spending his time outdoors. His passion is helping leaders excel and creating disciples to change the world. This essay is adapted from one of Hiebert's blog posts at <http://empoweringmissional.com>



Growing churches

Three characteristics of effective small-town churches

Our English language is full of oxymorons: found missing, same difference and definite maybe. To some, “small-town church growth” sounds like an oxymoron. With only one stoplight and precious few residents, can the small-town church actually grow? It can, and it has in many contexts.

For the past 25 years as I’ve traveled across the United States, I have observed shared characteristics of effective evangelistic town and country churches.

A sense of urgency. Many rural people tend to think most everyone in their community is a Christian. And even when people recognize that not everyone follows Christ, they tend to think the church has been in the community long enough that people know it’s there and that they are welcome to attend anytime. They don’t feel a sense of urgency to become proactive in evangelism.

One way to develop this sense of necessity is to compile statistics that show the need. Don’t just quote generic statistics for the country. Do a little homework on your community. If you don’t do the research, your congregation will inevitably think your community is an exception.

When I was pastoring in a town of 500, the city utilities man attended our church. He told me one day that he had hooked up about a dozen electrical meters in our town in the past three months. I was shocked and passed the news on to our evangelism committee. They didn’t believe me until I produced names. Our committee developed a plan for welcoming newcomers to town and befriending them. A number of these new residents became a part of our church.

One of the characteristics of town and country settings that you can take advantage of in gathering data is small-town intimacy. Unlike in a city like Chicago, those of us living in small towns likely know who has a home church and who doesn’t. We can mentally go street-by-street, section-by-section and make a list of households that don’t regularly attend church. Use this list to determine what percentage in your community is likely unchurched.

The unsaved are out there. Gathering information can open the eyes of your congregation and help give a sense of urgency for evangelism.

Credibility. In urban areas, one could potentially be effective in evangelism without have a credible life. You could cuss out a fellow employee but be an effective youth leader. Your marriage could be in shambles but you could be a successful small group leader.

Why? Because you are serving people you don’t know or aren’t with all week long. They have no idea how you lead your life.

Contrast this to the small town environment where it’s almost impossible to lead a double life. You can’t cheat your neighbor, not pay your bills or tell off-color jokes to someone on the street and then be successful in sharing the Lord with these same people later in the week.

Without credibility, it isn’t too likely that one can be effective at evangelism in a small town. Two kinds of credibility are needed: personal and corporate.

In small town settings, one’s personal history is known: conduct, values, past sins, marriage relationship, family life, financial dealings—it’s all an open book. And if one’s book doesn’t make for the kind of reading that enhances credibility, then one’s ability to be successful at evangelism is in question. Life in a small town is lived in a fishbowl. Personal credibility is essential.

What is true for individuals is also true for the church. Because of the social intimacy present in small communities, evangelism efforts will likely not be effective if the church is not healthy. Health is what makes a church credible.

Sooner or later, every person and every church takes their turn at messing up. And in a small town, everyone knows it. If not messing up is a prerequisite for effective evangelism, then no one will be able to do it. So how can one maintain credibility in a small town?

One answer is for a congregation to regularly spend time in individual and corporate repentance. Follow the example of the prayers of the Bible, many of which consist of the spiritual leader bringing the sins of the people before God. Pray thoughtfully and with great care.

Many times during Sunday morning prayer times, as pastor I confessed the sins of the people before God. Not private sins that I learned from counseling appointments during the week, but general sins that I knew people committed. I would say things like, “Since last week some of us have yelled at our children when we shouldn’t have, cheated on a test at school or gossiped against a neighbor.”

Corporate repentance is not only a regular reminder of the importance of confession and repentance, it also has a cleansing benefit. Confessing sins has a way of encouraging us not to commit the same sins next week.

Corporate confession not only helps the church become healthy, it also provides a model for individual

in rural communities

confession. It shows the need for making things right with God and with people. Maybe someone says something that causes a congregational meeting to blow up and word gets out into the community, damaging the church's witness. But if conflict is dealt with properly, the community will hear about that too. They will say, "People aren't perfect at First Church, but when wrongs happen there they deal with them."

All of us have sinned—as individuals and as congregations. This doesn't mean our credibility is lost forever. What we need to understand is that humble repentance is a powerful witness. It's the kind of news that gets around town too! It restores credibility.

Multifaceted. Churches that are effective at evangelism take a multi-faceted approach. They don't look for one formula, a single program or one approach as their solution. Their approach is from a number of angles—sometimes dozens of them.

These churches look for obstacles that need to be removed that are making evangelism difficult. For example, a church constitution that requires a form of decision-making that creates a lot of open conflict and harms the church's reputation could be a hindrance.

They look for building improvements that are needed to make the church more attractive for newcomers: new paint, a

pleasant foyer, updated nursery, upgraded sound system or new bathroom fixtures.

They look for church ministries that need improvement: music or children's programs.

They create opportunities for their people to be involved in evangelism: showing movies on Main Street, hosting a children's rodeo, holding vacation Bible school or organizing a Thanksgiving dinner.

Multifaceted churches repeatedly suggest many ways that the congregation can be involved with evangelism on the personal level: going hunting with an unbeliever, inviting neighbors to your home, heading up the town's welcome wagon program for newcomers, volunteering in the public school, etc.

Small-town churches can grow, although the strategies may be different than in urban settings. I hope that the observations in this article will trigger something that might be implemented in your small-town church.

Ron Klassen is the executive director of Rural Home Missionary Association, a ministry that plants and strengthens churches in small-town America. Klassen, a former Mennonite Brethren pastor, will be a resource speaker at the Sept. 5-6 LEAD ONE USMB leadership training event in Sioux Falls, SD.

By Ron Klassen

Why our Mennonite colleges matter

By D. Merrill Ewert

Transformation is the difference provided by Mennonite higher education

“My son is a far better doctor than I will ever be because he went to Fresno Pacific University,” the highly respected physician said.

Startled, I blurted out, “Why?”

The father explained: The professors at the world-renowned university where he had graduated “did everything in their power to squeeze the last drop of faith out of me.” That process continued in medical school, he said, leaving him “amazed that I am still a Christian.”

By contrast, at Fresno Pacific his son was “grounded in his faith” and “nurtured in his relationship with the Lord” in ways that have made him the “caring and compassionate doctor” he has become. The FPU professors who taught his son were not only great teachers but also “wonderful mentors who became friends for life.”

Stories like this can be told about all Mennonite colleges and universities. These stories must be told today, when our nation’s institutions of higher learning, secular and religious, find themselves at the center of a national debate over the nature, purpose and value of higher education. Some critics argue that college has not only become too costly but that it also takes students too long to graduate. When they do, students leave burdened with debt and holding degrees that don’t lead to meaningful jobs or promising careers.

In our own churches, some families left struggling by the recession are now asking whether a degree from a Christian college is worth the added cost over tuition at a public university. Some denominations are even questioning whether their colleges and universities are worth the investment.

The Mennonite commitment

Christians created higher education in the United States. All but one of the nine colleges in colonial America had as a major goal preparing ministers for the church. The College of

Philadelphia (today the University of Pennsylvania) was the exception. Christian institutions had a virtual monopoly until the revolution, but it was the Morrell Act of 1862 establishing the Land Grant System that sparked the significant expansion of public universities.

Mennonites in the United States, Goshen College Professor Paul Keim suggests in an article published in *The Future of Religious Colleges*, came late to higher education, but moved forward vigorously at the turn of the 20th century once the need was established.

More than a century ago, Mennonite leader S. B. Wenger wrote: “Our young people will have an education and if we cannot give it to them in well-guarded schools of our own, they will go out into other schools and get it, and according to past experiences we need not expect more than a small percentage of them to return to the church Many bright young minds have been lost to the church by going out into the world schools to acquire an education (quoted in Keim).”

Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., came first in 1887. Goshen (Ind.) followed in 1894, Bluffton (Ohio) in 1899, Tabor (Kan.) in 1908, Hesston (Kan.) in 1909 and Eastern Mennonite University (Va.) in 1917. Pacific Bible Institute, which ultimately became Fresno Pacific University (Calif.), opened in 1944.

Over the years all these institutions have evolved in response to changing conditions and new opportunities, revising missions, adding programs, gaining accreditation, sometimes changing names and even moving to new locations. What has not changed is the commitment of our Mennonite colleges and universities. They continue to prepare students for jobs, vocations and service to the church and the world.

Education matters

Any college degree makes a significant difference in peoples’ lives. In *How College Affects Students*, Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini

“

My professors introduced me to new fields of study, broadened my views of the world, shaped my understanding of ministry and helped call me to a life of mission and service.

”

summarize thousands of studies done over three decades on the impact of undergraduate education. They found that college degrees increase students' levels of critical thinking, verbal and quantitative skills and general knowledge. Graduates have greater self-confidence and leadership skills, stronger networks of social support and lower levels of abuse and family violence.

They are also more likely to exercise and less likely to smoke or engage in substance abuse. College graduates live longer, are more likely to have health insurance and enjoy greater financial security. People with at least some college are also more likely to vote, give blood and volunteer in their communities. They are also less likely to draw on public assistance.

A study by the Pew Charitable Trusts found that the median annual income of Millennials (ages 25-32) working full-time in 2012 was \$45,500 for those with at least a bachelor's degree, \$30,000 for those with a two-year degree or some college and \$28,000 for high school graduates. The unemployment rate for Millennials was 3.8 percent for those with a bachelor's degree and above, 8.1 percent for an associate degree or some college and 12.2 for high school grads. Most importantly, the poverty rate is only 5.8 percent for Millennials with a bachelor's degree, versus 14.7 percent for those with an associate's degree or some college and 21.8 percent for those with high school degrees.

These trends will intensify in the future. A Georgetown University study found that 72 percent of the jobs available in 1972 required a high school diploma or less. By 2010, that number had fallen to 41 percent. Researchers project that of the 164 million jobs expected in 2020, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) will require some college. While there will always be jobs that do not require undergraduate training, attending college improves one's economic prospects.

Society and the church

As important as higher education is to the prosperity of individuals, the work of Christian colleges and universities also matters to wider society and the church. Pascarella and Terenzini found that college increases a student's "level of principled moral reasoning," a very important finding at a time when many in our society have lost their moral compass.

This increase in moral reasoning, the researchers found, is greater among those students from small, private institutions than those at public colleges and universities. Though we have always believed Christian institutions strengthen values, research confirms our Mennonite colleges and universities are places where lives are transformed and people are prepared for ministry and service.

Transformative places

A year or so after I became president of Fresno Pacific, my wife, Priscilla, and I participated in a seminar on the university presidency as a vocation and calling. Funded by a major foundation, 20 presidents and their spouses spent several days discussing university leadership.

Though we had never met before, Walter, president of a historically black institution, and I often came down on the

same side in discussions. He had been a tenured professor and administrator at Harvard during the time I had taught and served as director of extension at Cornell.

Between sessions, several presidents gathered around us and asked what teaching in the "Ivies" was like. We both said the students are very bright, which makes teaching both challenging and fun. Walter joked, "My students were a lot smarter than I am!"

"The same at Cornell," I added, "I never accepted a new Ph.D. student unless I was convinced she/he was smarter than me."

After a short silence, another president mused, "That must have made the decision for you guys to leave Harvard and Cornell very difficult."

Walter said, "Not really." I agreed and then asked, "Walter, during those 12 years at Harvard, how many times did a student come up to you and say, 'I thank God for Harvard! My life has forever changed because I came here? I'm so glad that I came to Harvard!'"

Walter thought a moment and said, "It never happened; no one ever said that to me. How about you, Merrill? How often did someone tell you that Cornell changed his or her life?"

"Never," I replied, "I don't recall ever hearing those words from a student during my 11-plus years at Cornell."

"So Walter," I continued, "how often do students tell you that they thank God for your university; that going there changed their lives?"

"At least once a day," he replied. "And how about you, Merrill? How often do you hear that at Fresno Pacific?"

"Not nearly as often as you do," I responded. "I probably hear it only two or three times a week."

The group again fell silent. Then another president said, "I get it."

Education an investment, not an expense

The word that best captures our denominational schools is "transformational." I regularly saw lives transformed at Fresno Pacific University, and it happened to me at Tabor College. Tabor helped me develop my critical thinking, analytical and writing skills. My professors introduced me to new fields of study, broadened my views of the world, shaped my understanding of ministry and helped call me to a life of mission and service.

A college education should not be considered an expense. It's an investment in people that affirms our God-given capacity to learn and grow. Our denominational schools are staffed by outstanding teachers who love, guide and mentor their students. And as these students learn, they walk through doors of opportunity—to serve the church, to shape our institutions, to lead in our communities and to minister to the world.

President emeritus of Fresno Pacific University, Merrill Ewert and his wife, Priscilla, currently live in Phoenix, Ariz., where he is doing research, writing and consulting. Coming from Cornell University, he served as FPU president from 2002 to 2012. After retiring from FPU, he worked as an advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Education in Washington, DC.

Challenged to move forward

Delegates hear church plant stories, recognize Boschman, revise Article 13

“**M**omentum” was the theme of the 30th USMB National Convention held July 26-27 in Santa Clara, Calif., and the motion repeatedly emphasized was moving forward with the mission of God. Among those who delivered that message were two keynote speakers who shared the same first name as well as a strong commitment to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ.

“We are on mission,” said USMB executive director Ed Boschman, who gave the Saturday morning address. “We have the right message for this time. We’re Bible-believers. We’re Jesus-centered. We’re Spirit-led. We call people to repentance. We are agents of reconciliation and peace. We are a covenant community. We are what our neighbors need.”

That afternoon, Boschman, who retired July 31, was recognized in a service that included an emotional foot washing (pictured on the cover.) Referring to Boschman as the “evangelistic conscience” of U.S. Mennonite Brethren, Gary Wall, the Pacific District Conference minister, said of Boschman, “You remind us often that unless Jesus saves and transforms a lost soul, we’re missing the mark of what it means to be a faithful people.”

Ed Stetzer, who was also the speaker for the National Pastors Conference, focused on church multiplication in his Friday evening keynote address. “There is a motion to the mission,” said Stetzer, referring to John 20:21. “Don’t let your church be a cul-de-sac on the Great Commission Highway.” Stetzer went on to challenge

U.S. Mennonite Brethren to plant churches in the subcultures—the “divots”—of today’s world.

And that’s just what USMB church planters are doing, said Mission USA

director Don Morris in his report Saturday morning. “We are finding those divots in which to plant churches,” said Morris. Stories told by the eight USMB church planters who spoke during the Mission USA report supported Morris’ statement.

A USMB priority that gained traction over the two-day convention was unity in spite of disagreement about



Delegates prayed throughout the 2014 National Convention, including the opening session of the convention.

how U.S. Mennonite Brethren can best express our understanding of peacemaking. Delegates discussed and voted on a revision to Article 13 of the USMB Confession of Faith. The revision was approved, making this the first time an article has been changed since the Confession of Faith became a national rather than binational North American statement.

Mission USA and BFL were two of 14 Mennonite Brethren and inter-Mennonite ministries that reported to the 194 delegates and guests during the two-day convention.

The National Convention was the second of two events that comprised *Conection 2014*. The National Pastors Conference was held July 24-25, also at the Santa Clara Marriott. —*Connie Faber*

For *Conection 2014* reports, see pages 18-22. Read extended reports at CL Online, www.usmb.org/Christian-Leader

Jeremy Jordan
@Jjpenguin
26 July 2014

Saying thank you and well done to @edboschman who has left a legacy of passion for reaching the lost. #USMB2014

Article 13 revision approved

Many of the 121 U.S. Mennonite Brethren (USMB) delegates who attended the July 2014 National Convention viewed the decision regarding a new version of Article 13 of the Confession of Faith (Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation) as *the* reason to attend this year's convention.

As delegates arrived and mingled Friday afternoon in the hallways of the Santa Clara Marriott, the proposed revision to Article 13 was one of the things they talked about. And so some delegates were concerned when Leadership Board chair Steve Schroeder announced at the opening business session that afternoon that amendments to the proposed revision could not be made from the floor.

But Saturday morning the Board of Faith and Life (BFL) report—both the tone and the content—seemed to calm those concerns and to foster a cordial atmosphere for the discussions that followed. BFL chair Larry Nikkel began by emphasizing the importance of delegates understanding the background of the proposed revision.

“My worry about all of this is that many of you have not been a part of this process,” said Nikkel. “What that means is that what has been thoroughly processed in many ways will feel very abrupt.”

To help delegates understand how the change was processed, Nikkel reviewed the 20 steps taken on “the road to the recommendation to alter Article 13 of the Confession of Faith.” The list began with a 2010 survey conducted at the biennial convention that year in which 57 percent of the delegates indicated that Article 13 should be reviewed and possibly revised.

After considering possible responses to the 2010 survey, BFL decided to initiate a review “with the hope of starting a new conversation that could lead to a deeper

level of understanding and commitment to the essence of Articles 12 and 13, possibly including revisions,” said Nikkel.

Based on the feedback BFL received at a January 2013 study conference, the board determined that no changes would be made to Article 12, The Society and State, and that the board would revise Article 13. BFL drafted and circulated a revision to Article 13. After receiving feedback from a variety of groups, the board developed a second and then a final recommendation.

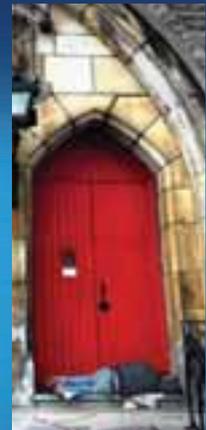
The revision broadens the scope of peacemaking and eliminates specific reference to alternative service in times of national conscription.

“Our peacemaking convictions originated in the heart of Jesus,” said Nikkel as he concluded his remarks. “That’s our spiritual heritage. If we turn our back on that part of the Gospel, we’ve turned our back on the heart of Jesus.”

A floor discussion moderated by BFL member Tim Geddert followed Nikkel’s summary. Delegates with a variety of viewpoints spoke courteously during the discussion that morning as well as during the afternoon workshop again moderated by Nikkel and Geddert. Prior to the vote that was taken during the final business session Saturday af-

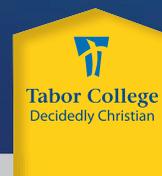
Tim Neufeld
@TimothyNeufeld
26 July 2014

The final discussion & vote on a revised Article 13 is in process. Regardless of the outcome, we probably need more dialogue. #USMB2014



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ternoon, delegates were again given the opportunity to speak to the issue.

Speakers affirmed the time and energy that BFL had invested in the process and recognized that the revision had been crafted carefully with thought given to each word and phrase with the goal of writing a statement that all USMB pastors and teachers will support.

“I am so pleased at the process,” said Frank Lanahan, pastor of the Lustre (Mont.) MB Church who called himself the “poster child for an extreme position” and spoke in favor of the revision during the morning session. “(The process) wasn’t roughshod. It wasn’t rushed through.”

In the end, with a ballot vote of 103 to 10, delegates approved a new statement on Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation. The delegates also unanimously passed a motion from the floor that mandates BFL to “foster communication within our congregations to encourage the study of, commitment to and growth in biblical love, peacemaking and reconciliation, guided by the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith Article 13 and to report the response to this initiative at the 2016 convention.”

Following the vote, there was a sense of relief that the recommendation was approved in spite of the fact that U.S. Mennonite Brethren continue to debate whether a Confession of Faith should be prescriptive or descriptive and do not agree on “what



Frank Lanahan, pastor of the Lustre (Mont.) MB Church, was one of at least 18 delegates who spoke during the floor-discussion or BFL workshop regarding proposed changes to Article 13 of the Confession of Faith.

the Bible means when the Bible says what the Bible says,” to use Nikkel’s words, with regard to living out the call to be peacemakers, particularly when it comes to military service.
—Connie Faber

Church planters share ministry stories

Stories from USMB church planters are frequently the highlight of a USMB National Convention and the Santa Clara convention was no different. Eight church planters or church plant couples, pictured below, shared stories of transformation. A ninth church planter reported via video.

Their stories reflected the diverse environments in which USMB church plants are ministering: among Filipinos in Las Vegas, Nev., and Russian and African immigrants in Spokane, Wash.; among Mormons in Utah and rapidly growing areas in South Texas. Mission USA church planters are ministering to the “unlikelies,” addicts, atheists and people influenced by spiritism.

Rick Barlett
@rbb2nd
26 July 2014

Love the story – MB church in Las Vegas, right next to In-n-Out. Follow the arrow – it points to the church.

Mission USA, the USMB church planting and church-resourcing ministry, is two years into a 10-year effort to annually plant six churches. “It takes all of us to do this,” said Don Morris, Mission USA director, adding that unfortunately only one-third of USMB congregations financially support the national conference.

Church planters voiced their appreciation for the support they receive. “There is an entire host of partners who are making this happen,” said Jason Quiring of The Greenhouse, the only non Later-Day Saints church in Utah County, Utah. “We are just the ones with feet on the ground.” —Connie Faber



Don Morris

Stetzer advocates for the “divots”

In his Friday night address, Connection 2014 keynote speaker Ed Stetzer focused on what it means for the church to be “on mission” in today’s world. Stetzer is president of LifeWay Research, an author, pastor, and well-known conference and seminar leader.

Balancing his iPad on his fingertips, Stetzer said that the church often thinks of the world as flat, like a pancake, where people are all the same and can be reached with the same approach. Turning the iPad on its side, he explained that society is more like a waffle, with various groups sectioned off into subcultures. He called the sections “divots” in the waffle.

Stetzer told two stories of his own experience of church in the “divots” of American society—one a church plant of young adults in the “arts and croissant district” of Louisville, Ky., and the other a cowboy church in Oklahoma City that “was so out of my culture zone. Beyond their subculture distinctives, he found a common spirit with both congregations—a spirit of following Jesus. “These people wouldn’t go to my church and I wouldn’t go to this church,” he reflected, “But thank God he sent someone (to plant a church in) that divot of the waffle.”

Because of our Anabaptist heritage, Mennonite Brethren are in a good place to connect with people searching for God, according to Stetzer. “People are open to some of the unique ways of thinking that you bring in the culture where we find ourselves today,” he said. “But the question has to be: Will you go into the divots of society because Jesus has sent you?”

Mennonite Brethren are also uniquely equipped to fulfill the Great Commission’s call to reach the increasing number of immigrants who make up American society, he said. “Wouldn’t people who love peace and justice love immigrants who are

often without the peace and justice in their own land?”

Stetzer asked. Mennonite Brethren are known for “caring for the hurting, both showing and sharing the gospel,” he said, efforts that effectively reach every part of society.

U.S. Mennonite Brethren should send their “best and brightest” to plant churches in the “divots” of society. “Will you send them to reach all different kinds of people?” he asked, “because if you will, then your church and your movement is not a cul-de-sac on the Great Commission highway.” —Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

Justin Hiebert
@jshiebert
24 July 2014

“Why are we surprised? We line people up in rows like a theater and then teach them to be passive spectators.” edstetzer #USMB2014



Ed Stetzer

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Boschman affirmed as bold leader

Ed Boschman, USMB executive director since the fall of 2007, was honored during the closing business session of the National Convention for his 40 years of ministry as a pastor and conference leader. Boschman, who addressed the delegates Saturday morning from the Gospel of John, retired following *Conection 2014*.

Steve Schroeder, Leadership Board chair; Gary Wall, Pacific District Conference minister; Larry Nikkel, Board of Faith and Life chair; and Terry Hunt,

North Carolina District minister, pastor and former Leadership Board member, reflected on Boschman's ministry. All four speakers affirmed Boschman's leadership gifts.

"One of the reasons I am standing before you is because of Ed," said Schroeder. "Ed was my youth pastor. He inspired us."

Nikkel said, "Ed is a leader, and he's not afraid to lead. Because of that, a lot has happened over the course of the last couple of years. You've helped us (the U.S. Conference) arrive at the point (organizationally) we are at today."

Wall referred to Boschman as a bold and godly leader who will continue to be the "evangelistic conscience" of the Mennonite Brethren.

Hunt said Boschman was "one of the first leaders I met that made me feel as if I was a leader."

Saying he wanted Boschman to know "how much we appreciate you," Hunt invited Boschman to the stage. The Grand Ballroom was silent as Hunt washed Boschman's feet and then prayed for Boschman and his wife, Carol. The crowd expressed their appreciation to Boschman with a standing ovation. —*Connie Faber*

Visit *CL Online* (<http://www.usmb.org/Boschman-interview>) to read an interview with Boschman about his ministry as the USMB executive director.



Ed Boschman, left, prays for Don Morris who assumed the role of interim USMB executive director following Boschman's retirement after the National Convention.

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Pastors reconnect, refuel

About 115 pastors and spouses from USMB congregations across the United States gathered July 24-25 in Santa Clara, Calif., to reconnect and refuel at the National Pastors Conference, held every two years just before the National Convention. The combined events comprised *Conection 2014*.

Refueling took place both within and outside of the scheduled sessions.

Stetzer focuses on mission

Ed Stetzer was the keynote speaker for two sessions and fielded questions from attendees during an additional question-and-answer session. Stetzer is president of LifeWay Research, an author, pastor and church planter.

Stetzer focused on the “one mission” part of the USMB mission statement in both sessions. Thursday evening he outlined a study of some 7,000 churches from all denomina-

tions that indicate the majority of people in the majority of churches in North America are unengaged in meaningful mission.

“We live in a mission field with a relatively unengaged mission force,” Stetzer said. “It can be more.”

He encouraged attendees from 1 Peter 4, saying that all have gifts, which God intends all to use and for which he empowers, in order to bring God glory.

He challenged pastors to remove obstacles to congregants owning the mission, which may mean rethinking building structures or ministry roles. “You can’t have dependency upon clergy and empowerment in mission at the same time,” he said.

Friday morning, he pointed to research that indicates that Christianity is increasingly losing its “home field advantage.” The question, Stetzer said, is how will the church respond to major cultural shifts?

By way of an answer, he drew from 2 Corinthians 5 to talk about receiving a new view, being sent on a mission of reconciliation and representing Jesus and his kingdom. He repeatedly reminded attendees that personal transformation is the motivation for mission. “Any compulsion toward mission that does not take into account a bloody cross and an empty tomb is ultimately a fool’s errand,” he said. “The world doesn’t need more nice people; it needs people who have been changed.”

Several USMB pastors responded to Stetzer’s comments in posts on the USMB website. Visit www.usmb.org and click on “See all USMB Pulse posts” to read their reflections.

Each session was set in the context of worship, led by John Szablowski and a team from The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif. The same ensemble led the delegates and guests in singing at the National Convention.

Reconnecting outside the sessions

Breakout groups late Friday morning were designed to further equip conference attendees. Options included workshops on specific topics and affinity groups—a new option that gave pastors in similar roles opportunity to discuss the joys and challenges of ministry.

The workshop targeting pastors’ wives, led by Jini Robie and Carol Boschman, was by far the most well-attended, with about 30 women participating.

Attendance for other breakout options was generally sparse, with far more people chatting in the hallways. That observation supports what many pastors and spouses informally offered as their main reason for attending: to connect with other pastors and families.

One attendee commented that this event was always a highlight because of those connections. Another appreciated how their children were building relationships (22 children participated in children’s activities).

Others took extra time before or after *Conection 2014* to vacation, visit friends or see local attractions. Organizers had hoped that the Santa Clara location, close to attractions ranging from Great America Theme Park, Levi’s Stadium, state parks and beaches, would encourage just that. —Myra Holmes



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Don Morris
Mission USA director

Bent out of shape

I recently attended the United States Golf Association (USGA) U.S. Senior Open golf tournament as this event was held just a few miles north of my home in Edmond, Okla. I saw many professional golfers over the age of 50 who I have watched over the years. It was a lot of fun to watch them hit that tiny white ball. And most of them can still hit it a long way and, for the most part, hit it accurately.

But as the hot day wore on, some of these professionals began making major mistakes, and as they made mistakes their demeanors declined with them. I would love to be able to hit a golf ball like these guys, making tons of money while doing so. Yet here they were, getting all out of sorts when they hit a shot badly. It seemed that some of them had lost their enjoyment of the game. But when the top prize is over \$700,000, no wonder they were so intense, even brokenhearted, about their golf game when playing poorly.

A golfer tries to score as low as possible in order to win. And when they score too high, no matter what level of player they are, they can be discouraged. A double bogey (two shots over par on a hole) can be heartbreaking for the dedicated golfer.

Golf is just a game. It pales in comparison to what is truly important in life, for what is truly important are those things that have eternal outcomes.

What is it in this life that breaks my heart? Is it a

double bogey? Is it an electric bill that's too high? Is it missing out on a pay raise? Is it an argument with my spouse?

Perhaps a better question might be, "Does God ever experience a broken heart? If so, what is it that breaks God's heart?" I believe that God does get brokenhearted, and it isn't over a golf score. It is about what truly matters. It is about broken people. I believe his love is so immense that God's heart breaks when he sees people choose the things of this world over a relationship with him and end up broken and in pain. John 3:16 comes to mind: "God so loved...that he gave...."

But I wonder sometimes if we who love God are broken enough over the things that break God's heart. Do we care enough to do whatever it takes to see more people come to know him? Do we rise up to help those who are experiencing brokenness? Are we more upset by the mundane happenings of life than we are that people, including our friends and relatives, are headed for eternal destruction? Are we storing up treasure on earth rather than helping to fund current kingdom-building work that has eternal consequences? Are we downright angry about the new scratch on our car? Or, are we downright angry that Satan is winning in so many people's lives? Does a double bogey really matter?

Three emerging church planting trends...

Did YOU know?

- Church planting is more **DIFFICULT THAN EVER**
- Church planting is more **FINANCIALLY CHALLENGING** than ever
- **CREATIVITY** combined with **HARD WORK** is more crucial than ever

Calling for church planting dollars

“We need to step it up; it’s time,” says Don Morris, USMB interim executive director and Mission USA director. Morris is referring to the need for USMB churches and donors to step up their game when it comes to providing resources and funds for U.S. church planting.

“We’re constantly in need of more resources,” says Morris. “Church planting is not something we do once and we’re finished. The need is ongoing, and in fact it’s increasing as we strive to plant more Mennonite Brethren churches to reach more people with the gospel.”

One of Morris’ concerns is that while many local church budgets keep going up and up, the amount given for domestic mission work—church planting—remains fairly stagnant.

“Our Canadian counterparts have a church planting budget that is many, many times higher than ours,” says Morris. “They have networks, training venues and multiple staff focused on church planting, and their churches are heavily involved to fund it all. They are planting a ton of churches, too.”

Morris says, “As much as we have tried to create a similar passion for church planting in the U.S., it’s been very difficult. USMB churches give well to international missions, and that is certainly a very good thing. But we don’t seem to have the same desire for U.S. mission work.”

Morris is looking for churches that are willing to provide significant funding for a specific church plant, perhaps for three to four years until the plant is self-sustaining.

“Along with district and Mission USA funds, we can plant a church if we have just two to three churches providing \$15,000 per year,” says Morris. “The church plant can be hundreds of miles away, but the investment of a church for doing that can be very special. It’s exciting for churches to know they’ve helped reach people in a new location with the gospel.”

Although he’s looking for more churches and individual donors, Morris appreciates the churches and donors that are already helping. “I don’t know what we’d do without the churches and donors that are involved in church planting at this point,” he says. “They are greatly appreciated. They’ve helped us plant

some amazing new churches across the country. Some individual donors are giving sacrificially to see church planting happen.

“But, it’s time for more of us to get involved in this,” says Morris “It is evangelism at its core. It’s eternal in consequence. It’s what we must be doing as a conference of churches.” Individual donors can give to Mission USA by visiting the new USMB website (www.usmb.org), going to the Mission USA page and clicking on the donor tab. Churches can call the main USMB office (800-257-0515) or Mission USA (405-684-3908.)

“It’s time!” Morris emphasizes.—*Mission USA*



Axiom Church pastor Gavin Lindman baptizes a new believer. Axiom is a USMB church plant in the greater Phoenix area.



Christine Guth

Autism is in the congregation

Offering Jesus' welcome to all children

If your congregation does not include a family affected by autism, odds are it will soon. One child in 88 lives with an autism spectrum condition, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. In simplest terms, all those on the autism spectrum share marked differences in social communication and restrictive interests or repetitive behaviors.

Supportive communities can make an enormous difference for families struggling to cope with a sometimes baffling condition that runs roughshod over parents' expectations and dreams and shapes family life in unimagined ways. Depending on the situation, some of the following approaches may be appropriate in your congregation:

Look for ways to help the family build trust and share their stories with a wider circle. Create opportunities to share information with sensitivity and respect that will help others understand and respond graciously to unusual behavior they observe. Consider providing basic information about autism to Sunday school teachers, youth workers, ushers and the child's peers.

A circle of support for parents may carry the family through rough periods. A friend coordinated a small group of caring people who took turns inviting me out once a week for coffee and conversation during my children's teen years when crises were exploding day by day. Childcare to make such respite breaks possible is an added blessing many families need.

Recruiting an intentional circle of friends in the congregation for the child can deflect problems and reduce opportunities for bullying. This involves teaching a group of relatively mature peers what the child's unusual behaviors might mean along with helpful responses. Such buddies give children with autism invaluable opportunities to practice social skills with peers.

Consider modifying the environment or providing adaptations in order to moderate sensory stimuli that cause the child pain. The loud sound of amplified music is a frequent offender. Can the volume be turned down or sound-dampening headphones be available? Some congregations that project words and visuals on a screen post a subtle visual cue to warn when loud music is about to begin. Others establish a fragrance-free zone in their worship space and convert to fragrance-free janitorial supplies.

Look for ways that the person with autism can contribute to congregational life, even if it stretches the bounds of tradition. If God has graced a person with a strong interest in deep-sea animals, for example, finding an avenue to share it with a congregation will take creativity but also promises to strengthen relationships and appreciation for the wonder of creation.

Finally, recognize that many of the challenges that autism brings to a family are lifelong. Children with autism grow up to become adults with autism. The congregation may be a resource to connect an autistic adult to a job or meaningful volunteering. Church members who make ongoing efforts to include adults on the autism spectrum may be shining stars to those with few friends. Aging parents of adults with autism may appreciate help planning for their loved one after they are gone.

As your congregation learns to receive graciously the people impacted by autism whom God is bringing to your doorstep, may you more deeply recognize the kingdom of God in your midst and open yourselves to its transforming power.

Christine Guth is program director for Anabaptist Disabilities Network, a ministry that supports Anabaptist congregations and individuals touched by disabilities. This article first appeared in Leader, a quarterly newsletter for lay leaders and pastors.



Randy Friesen

What jersey do you wear?

Our first identity is as citizens of Christ's kingdom

The World Cup Football (or soccer) tournament has highlighted the dormant tribal identities of many North Americans. During the tournament, a quick look at the attire of staff around the table at meetings in our MB Mission office indicates that the ethnic loyalties of Dutch, German, Brazilian and Mexican fans are still active in our midst. Sport has a way of reminding us we like to belong to something larger than ourselves.

Sometimes we're even willing to pay a big price for that loyalty. In his best seller *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman explores the reasons why many are still willing to sacrifice everything globalism and modernity have offered us (including the Lexus) in the dream of holding onto our "olive tree" and the tribal values that we are rooted in.

The recent conflict in Ukraine has exposed the Russian, Ukrainian and Tartar ethnic loyalties which some are prepared to die for. In the midst of the current conflict, ethnic Russian background Baptists living in Eastern Ukraine have been told by local militias that only Russian Orthodox churches will be allowed to operate in their region. Many families have fled to Central Ukraine and are now being assisted by Menonite Brethren church members from Ukrainian background who value their common identity in Christ more than their ethnic origins. It seems there is something more powerful than our ethnic identities and loyalties.

When I first explored these ideas with our global mission family, one of our workers responded with a story. Following a witnessing conversation with a Muslim on the street, the man gave him a wristwatch containing the insignia of this man's favorite football

(soccer) team as a gift. Our worker brought it home and shared the story with his roommates. After seeing the watch, one of his roommates, who was also active in a local campus ministry and who was a die-hard fan of another football team, declared, "I will no longer call you brother" and left. He was serious! His football loyalties were stronger than his new faith in Christ! Our worker was left wondering what kind of Christianity his roommate was living and sharing.

We all know what jersey to wear to church, but how about on the streets? Are we clear that our first identity is as citizens of Christ's kingdom regardless of our ethnic heritage? How will we stand with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine or Congo (Hutus and Tutsis) or Laos or North Africa where tribal loyalties are pulling at them? As common disciples of Jesus we know our leader and we know his ways.

I wonder whether we need to frontload this understanding of identity and loyalty to Christ and his kingdom when we share the gospel? "If anyone comes after me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters (football team and ethnic group)—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). If we don't frontload this question of identity and loyalty into our understanding of conversion, we are forever playing catch-up in our discipleship, fighting the magnetic pull of entertainment, family and political forces. What team are we living for?

Randy Friesen is the general director of MB Mission, the North American mission agency that focuses on holistic church planting that transforms communities among the least reached. This essay is adapted from Friesen's July Vision for Mission newsletter.

re: Missions

Check out the new MB Mission web series that explores the impact that short-term mission experiences have on people.

"This Is Why We Go" (<http://www.mbmission.org/this-is-why-we-go>)

follows 11 young adults and the three members of the MB Mission media team that recorded their adventures in Mexico, France and Burkino Faso.

milestones

BAPTISM/MEMBERSHIP

Maggie Wiebe, Aden Olesen, Jeshua Maendl, Mason Weatherby, Quinton Dunn, Cade Wartman, Raquel Mills, Cindy Gerstner, Carol Perez, Jesse Perez, Micah Allred, Chue Smith, Marzena Hofheins, Matt Barjenbruch and Mariah Cella were baptized Aug. 10 at **South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah**. Courtney Leman was baptized at SMCC@Daybreak, the campus in South Jordan.

Adri de Wet was received Aug. 10 as a member of **Bethel MB Church, Yale, SD**.

Amanda Meador, Benjie Ashmore, Emily Wells, Kai Mercado, Kelly McGiffney, Linda Wells, Tyler Cabrera and Zach Fidler were baptized Aug. 2 at **The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

Mason Gonzalez and Tabea Redd were baptized June 29 and received as members of **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church**. Helena Redd and Janet Selvidge were received as members.

Shawna Glanzer, Ashley Glanzer and Jaimie Glanzer were baptized July 27 and received as members of **Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, SD**.

Steve Pauls was received Aug. 3 as a member of **College Community Church MB, Clovis, Calif.**

Jamie Bartel was baptized May 18 at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church**. Ashton Bowen was baptized May 11.

Abe and Helena Hamm, Jessica Wedel, Brandon Staats, Lauren Lightner, Jonah Vainerere, Brooklyn Staats and Emma Lightner were received July 6 as members of **Garden Valley Church, Garden City, Kan.**

WORKERS

Kalen Heller has completed his yearlong term as outreach pastor at **Garden Park Church, Denver, Colo.** The church held a farewell potluck for him and his wife, Sarah, Aug. 3. Peter Heim began serving in August as associate pastor.

Jacob Blanton and Dani Hamilton were summer children's ministry interns at **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

Luke Bese served as a summer intern at **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church**.

Dave Froese has concluded his ministry at **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.** The church held a farewell celebration for him and his wife, Susan, July 27. He began serving Sept. 1 as interim pastor at **Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.**

Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church held a retirement party July 27 for pastoral couple Ron and Fran Penner.

Will Peterson was installed as associate pastor at **Faith Bible Church, Lawton, Okla.**, May 18.

DEATHS

Baltzer, Jona, Hillsboro, Kan., of Hillsboro MB Church, Nov. 4, 1924-June 21, 2014. Parents: John and Amanda Baltzer. Spouse: Mary Eitzen, deceased. Children: Carol Janzen, Doug; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Classen, Albert H., Wichita, Kan., of First MB Church, Wichita, Dec. 23, 1924-May 28, 2014. Parents: Henry and Sara (Friesen) Classen. Spouse: Bertha Ediger, deceased. Children: Ronald, Marcene; three grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Dirks, Evelyn M. Ediger, Buhler, Kan., of Buhler MB Church, May 17, 1917-June 18, 2014. Parents: John A. and Sarah (Adrian) Ediger. Spouse: Victor Dirks. Children: Marlene Eitzen, Evonne Packard; two grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild.

Hiebert, Carla, Buhler, Kan., of Buhler MB Church, Jan. 15, 1987-May 21, 2014. Parents: David and Rhonda Hiebert. Children: Caleb.

Huebert, Frank D., Fairview, Okla., of Fairview MB Church, June 4, 1917-July 11, 2014. Parents: Jacob F. and Sara (Dick) Huebert. Spouse: Evelyn Edna Epp, deceased. Children: Allen, Frank Jr., Sharon Oglesbee, Karen Penner; 11 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren.

Isaak, Helen P., Reedley, Calif. member of Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church, Oct. 19, 1917-June 1, 2014. Parents: Peter D. and Anna (Klippenstein) Isaak.

Isaak, Pete P., Reedley, Calif., member of Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church, Aug. 30, 1923-June 21, 2014. Parents: Peter D. and Anna (Klippenstein) Isaak. Spouse: Betty (Wiest) Isaak. Children: Ken, JoAnn Brandt, Gene; 13 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

Jost, Robert Clinton, Hillsboro, Kan., of Hillsboro MB Church, Aug. 12, 1920-May 6, 2014. Parents: Peter G. and Elizabeth (Funk) Jost. Spouse: Irene Fertig. Children: Robetta Trapp, Lynn, Nancy Ozick; five grandchildren; five great-grandchildren.

Kleinsasser, Willis, Reno, Nev., former member of Zion MB Church, Dinuba, Calif., May 9, 1928-June 2, 2014. Parents: John A. and Katharina (Glanzer) Kleinsasser. Spouse: Ethel (Willems) Kleinsasser. Children: Alan, Parry, Ruth Wysocki, Brian; 10 grandchildren; five great-grandchildren.

Neufeld, Susie Unruh, Enid, Okla., of Enid MB Church, March 6, 1915-June 26, 2014. Parents: Cornelius and Katie Unruh. Spouse, Gerhard Neufeld, deceased; Dave Unruh, deceased. Children: Elsie Lehman, Wilbur, Nancy Jones, Larry; five grandchildren; one great-grandchild.

Penner, Louis James, San Jose, Calif., member of Lincoln Glen MB Church, San Jose, Oct. 30, 1927-April 11, 2014. Parents: J.S. and Elizabeth

Churches team up

USMB congregations representing three cities, two districts and two languages teamed up for an outreach in Omaha, Neb., July 15-20. Iglesia Agua Viva (IAV), Omaha, Neb.—a Spanish-language church in the Central District Conference (CDC)—hosted about 10 people from Grace Bible Church, Gettysburg, SD—an English-language, CDC congregation—and about 20 people from Mission (Texas) MB Church—a Spanish-language church in the Latin American Mennonite Brethren (LAMB) district. In addition, individuals from other USMB congregations in Omaha served in specific areas. Activities included a daily scriptural challenge, service projects and vacation Bible school at Iglesia Agua Viva and in a city park. The week ended with a community festival on Saturday. The outreach effort was the outworking of a sister-church relationship between Mission MB and Grace Bible Church that began in 2009. Iglesia Agua Viva joined summer outreaches in Texas in 2012 and 2013; this year the three churches chose to work together in Omaha. Moises Tagle, of the LAMB district, says the three churches are likely to work together again next summer. “We will pray for God’s leading and continue planning,” he says. “Wherever he leads, we would be foolish not to follow.”

Summer club prepares kids

For the fourth summer, North Fresno (Calif.) Church offered Summer Adventure Club for under-resourced children and teens who often find themselves alone with little structure in summer. The six-week, 20-hour-a-week program used the gifts and skills of people in the congregation and community to better prepare youth for the next school year academically, spiritually and emotionally. Fourth through eighth graders who applied for the free program received community-building, mind-challenging electives, culturally enriching field trips and teaching about biblical characters. The program was co-sponsored by the congregation's community benefit organization, Fresno Area Community Enterprises (FACE), and ran June 24-Aug. 1.

Scripture challenge

First MB Church, Wichita, Kan., is one of many USMB congregations challenging attendees to interact with Scripture regularly. In 2014, the church is asking attendees to memorize 10 key Bible passages; each passage is the focus of a Sunday morning message sometime during the year. The church provided downloadable "challenge cards" for reminders on the fridge or the phone and encouraged participants to share their progress via email or on Twitter using a designated hashtag. The 10 passages are: Duet 30:11-20; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Ps. 23; Matt. 28:18-20; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 6:10-20; Phil. 3:7-11; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 13:1-6; and Roman. 8:28-39.

Penner. Spouse: Norma Elaine Penner. Children: Dennis, Daryl; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Regier, Frieda, Reedley Calif., of Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church, June 2, 1934-May 12, 2014. Parents: Bernard and Anna (Harms) Balzer. Spouse, John Regier. Children: Janet Warkentin, John; three grandchildren; five great-grandchildren.

Stoesz, Evelyn M., Mountain Lake, Minn., of Community Bible Church, Mountain Lake, June 23, 1924-Jan. 19, 2014. Parents: Henry S. and Marie (Benzler) Loewens. Spouse: John Stoesz. Children: Janelle, Craig, Wendell; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.

Wall, John, Kitchener, Ont., of Kitchener MB Church, Nov. 5, 1923-March 18, 2014. Parents: Aron and Maria (Braun) Wall. Spouse: Frieda Baerg, deceased. Children: Marlene, Robert; two grandchildren.

reaching in

DISCIPLESHIP

As part of summer adult Sunday school, attendees of **Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.**, were encouraged to visit other churches as they had opportunity, then reflect on that experience and report Aug. 24.

Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., has started a new middle school ministry for those in grades five through eight. The group will meet regularly on Sunday mornings. They kicked off the new ministry with a pool party July 27.

Enid (Okla.) MB Church offered a parenting conference Aug. 23-24. "Impressing Christ into the Hearts of Children" aimed to equip parents with practical tools to guide and teach children the gospel.

South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah, hosted a seminar on "Deep Friendships, Different Faiths" July 8 and 15. The seminar aimed to help attendees understand how to be a friend with someone with a different spiritual background.

FELLOWSHIP

Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., held their annual ice cream social and contest Aug. 6. An all-church event June 18 featured hot dogs and softball at the church's baseball diamond.

Motorcycle enthusiasts from **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church**, called "Biker Boys," rode to a restaurant for dinner Aug. 8.

Women from **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** had a salad supper and played bingo July 10.

Students from **North Fresno (Calif.) Church; College Community Church MB, Clovis, Calif.;**

and **Bethany MB Church, Fresno**, gathered to eat dinner and play capture the flag July 20.

Women from **Shadow Mountain Community Church, West Jordan, Utah**, held a sleepover Aug. 15-16.

Aug. 1 was "Taco Train Night" at **Blossom Valley Bible Church, San Jose, Calif.**, with a taco dinner followed by Mexican train dominoes.

High school youth from **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, participated this summer in a "Tour of Pools," a series of pool parties at various homes.

Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church held a Family Celebration Day June 1, featuring a picnic at the local pool and a "marrieds vs. singles" softball game.

A mother/daughter "Frozen Fun Night" held May 30 at **Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan.**, featured games, activities and ice cream.

Grace Bible Church, Gettysburg, SD, held an all-church campout June 27-29.

Men from **Valleyview Bible Church, Cimarron, Kan.**, went to the local race track to watch sprint car racing July 25.

Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb., hosted "After" events from time to time this summer—picnics, games and fellowship held after worship. Participants brought their own lunches.

Attendees of **South Mountain Community Church, Draper, Utah**, camped out overnight at the church July 4. The evening included live music and fireworks.

Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, SD, provided "Donuts for Dad" June 15.

Youth from **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**, hosted a pancake and sausage breakfast June 8 to raise funds for camp.

WORSHIP

A combined service Aug. 17 at **Butler MB Church, Fresno, Calif.**, focused on prayer for students, teachers and area schools.

Shafter (Calif.) MB Church offered a series of workshops on leading worship for fifth and sixth graders this summer; participants then led worship Aug. 17.

reaching out

LOCALLY

Volunteers from **North Park Community Church, Eugene, Ore.**, participated in a community-wide day of service Aug. 23 by working at their neighborhood elementary school.

Women from **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, organized a diaper drive this summer to benefit local parents who can't afford diapers.

Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Aurora, Colo., hosted sports camps June 9-12 for children ages four through 13. Sports offered included soccer, volleyball, flag football and basketball. Discipleship classes for adults were offered concurrently.

GLOBALLY

Garden Valley Church, Garden City, Kan., sent a team of youth and sponsors to serve in Chicago July 12-19.

Families from **The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, served in Mexico Aug. 22-24.

Twenty people from **Lighthouse Community Church, Wichita, Kan.**, went to Dallas, Texas, July 14-20 for a short-term, urban mission trip.

A team of 12 youth and sponsors from **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church** served in Guatemala July 14-26.

Enid (Okla.) MB Church encouraged attendees to pray for summer mission teams by signing up for an hour in the church's prayer room July 13-14.

Teams from **Buhler (Kan.) MB Church, Community Bible Church, Olathe, Kan.; Ebenfield MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.**; and individuals from **Enid (Okla.) MB Church** served in Vancouver, BC, with MB Mission's SOAR short-term program July 11-20.

Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church sent a team to Portugal June 11-21.

A team of 28 youth and 10 sponsors from **Corn (Okla.) MB Church** served with Habitat for Humanity in Florida in July.

CLEARINGHOUSE

LOCAL CHURCH JOB OPENINGS

Worship Director: First MB Church, Wichita Kan., is seeking a part-time classic worship director. In partnership with the lead pastor and creative arts director, plan/lead the weekly classic worship service. Please send resume to employment@firstmbchurch.org

Senior Pastor: Gateway MB Church, Port Alberni, BC, is prayerfully seeking a senior pastor. We are seeking someone who is mature, with life experience both in and out of ministry and experience in mentoring. This person will come alongside us and empower us in our gifting to reach our city. For more info please see our posting at http://bcmb.org/downloads/sb_bcmb/SeniorPastorjobdescription.docx

Lead Pastor: Community Bible Church in Olathe, Kan., is seeking a full time lead pastor for our congregation of approximately 250. Inquiries or resumes should be sent to Pastor Search Team, Community Bible Church, 1304 N. Parker, Olathe, KS 66061, or emailed to dale.cbcpst@gmail.com.

Associate Pastor: Madera Ave. Bible Church in Madera, Calif., has an immediate opening for a full-time associate pastor, a new position for the church. The ideal candidate would have a church-planting mind-set, exhibit strong leadership skills and have previous ministry experience. Salary will be commensurate with experience. All interested parties are encouraged to mail or email a letter and resume to: Madera Ave. Bible Church, 124 Walnut, Madera, CA 93637 pastor@maderabilechurch.org

Associate Pastor: Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church is seeking a full time associate pastor for worship and youth 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 kmbcsearch@gmail.com

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)

UNIVERSITY JOB OPENINGS

School of Business: Fresno Pacific University is seeking qualified candidates for positions in the School of Business: Program Director of the Undergraduate Business Management Program; Program Director of Masters in Business Administration Program and Regional Center Director of Business Programs – Visalia. All job descriptions and applications may be viewed online at the Fresno Pacific University website: www.fresno.edu/careers

Nursing: Fresno Pacific University's nursing program invites applications for a full-time or part-time faculty position. The nursing program is currently CCNE accredited and has an AND—BSN program and an MSN program with a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) focus. View complete job description and requirements at www.fresno.edu/careers.

EVENT

MEDA Convention 2014: "Human Dignity through Entrepreneurship" Join MEDA for four days of inspiration, information and networking in Winnipeg Nov. 6-9. Plenary sessions feature topics on creating human dignity through business; combining MEDA financing and training to enhance small business development globally; a captivating story of imprisonment in North Korea, and congregational vision for dignity. The Friday evening session will be held at the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Go to www.medaconvention.org for full descriptions of the plenary sessions, seminars, tours and on-line registration, or call 1 (800) 665-7026 for more information.

NEW BOOK

For Sale: *Stories from an Old Town* by Phyllis Hiebert Martens. Twelve stories set in old Mt. Lake, Minn., home of the author's grandparents: stories of grace, of grief, and, yes, small town gossip! Underlying themes are the struggle with the unforgiving conservatism of church and town, or with being marginal, looked down on; and the uplifting power of compassion. Some stories depict real events in the old town; others are fictional. Available from Amazon, or Phyllis Martens for \$15, epmartens@comcast.net.

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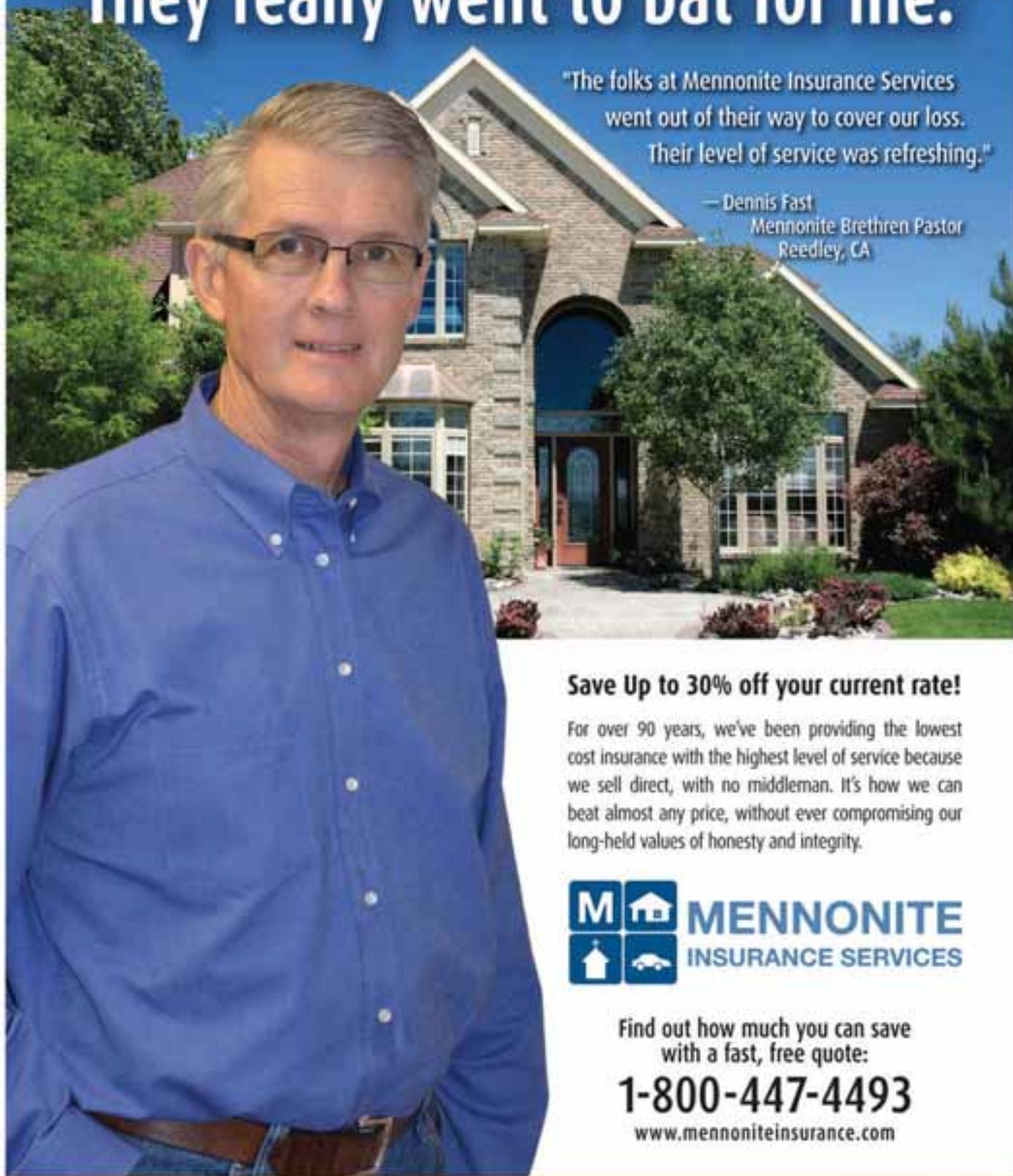
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— Dennis Fast
Mennonite Brethren Pastor
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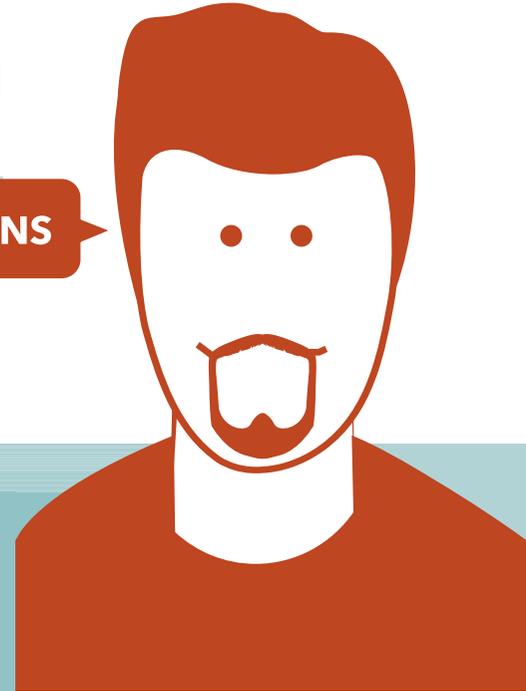
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