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Even when
it hurts

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My child
a bully?

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Pass it
forward

Full circle ministry

from the editor



“

Selfishness is the “virus” that often prevents us from loving others with the same focus and intensity that we love ourselves.

”

Jesus said, “*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest of the Laws. The second is like it, You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)*

In his conversation with the Pharisees recorded in Matthew 22, Jesus commands his disciples to put the desires of others before their own interests. A recent experience reminded me why following this commandment is easier said than done.

Two ordinary viruses disrupted the Faber household in early December. The first was of the medical variety. Our youngest daughter contracted mononucleosis, a common illness that typically leaves one feeling tired and weak even after the virus is gone. This was not welcome news during college finals. The second was of the computer variety, and it was also not good news given the deadlines for this issue of *Christian Leader*. While computer viruses are not unusual, up until late 2014 I had avoided the insidious invasion of viruses, trojans and malware.

A common thread running through the feature articles in this issue is the importance of loving others to the same degree that we love ourselves. Jan Johnson writes about this in terms of dying to self, Lisa Keith as seeing the inherent value in another person and John Richardson as sacrificial love.

When it comes to choosing between my wants and the needs and wishes of others, it's easy to prioritize the things that I desire. Thanks to sin, being selfish is our default mode. Selfishness is the “virus” that often prevents us from loving others with the same focus and intensity that we love ourselves. For example, every so often my husband and I find ourselves in a matrimonial funk—something is off. More than once we've diagnosed the problem as selfishness. We've slipped into thinking first about ourselves instead of the other person. We've been infected. Sometimes we can trace the origin of this selfishness to a specific event or decision. Other times selfishness has wormed its way into our relationship without us even being aware of its progress.

Sin is what makes it so difficult to love my neighbor—and my husband—to the same degree that I love myself. Sin demands the kind of aggressive intervention that comes with a computer virus. Unlike a viral infection, selfishness and other sins will not go away on their own. Defeating sin requires the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The season of Lent, beginning Feb. 18, can be a time when we allow ourselves to be transformed from self-centered to other-centered people. My prayer is that I can get out of the way and allow the Great Physician to change me. I pray the same for you.



Connie Faber
Editor

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Center insert — *MB Mission*

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

www.usmb.org



Luke Haidle



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"Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips." Psalm 141:3



Jon C. Wiebe

(from USMB leaders)

conferenceCall

You love to give

Survey says we support the local church with our giving

1 Timothy 6:18 is becoming one of my favorite passages: "Command them (us) to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share." That pretty much captures the essence of generosity, does it not? Twice this verse tells us to be generous with our time for the sake of others. And not just to do good, but to be rich in good deeds. As Andy Stanley puts it, our deeds should be above average. Rich in good deeds.

Then the focus shifts to our money. Twice we are encouraged to give. The apostle Paul says we should be "generous" and "willing to share." Not just people who give, but people who are willing to give. Not just donors, but generous donors. Yet, an analysis by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* verified once again that on average, Americans give about 3 percent. It is interesting to note that the most generous states with Mennonite Brethren churches are Utah at #1 followed by Oklahoma at #8. The least generous states in our MB family are California at #40 and North Dakota at #44.

A survey conducted by MB Foundation at the 2014 USMB National Convention shows Mennonite Brethren love our churches and love to give. Participants were asked to list the top five charities to which they love to give, and results were tallied to give increasing weight to higher rankings. The local church easily ranked first for respondents, receiving three times as many mentions as any other category, which is compounded because they received a #1 ranking in over 65 percent of surveys.

Mission work also ranks highly, as MB Mission came in second and a general missions category came in third. Education is also very important to Mennonite Brethren. Three of the top 10 organizations are MB educational institutions, and if all 18

educational institutions mentioned were lumped together as a category it would easily jump to second behind the local church.

It is also clear that, while we have many common interests, Mennonite Brethren love to give to a huge variety of charities. We had 119 responses to our survey, and over 200 different charities or charity groups were mentioned. Mennonite Brethren are fueling ministry with hundreds of organizations around the world! On the back cover of this issue, you'll find an illustration of the top 31 ministries we love to give to.

Do you love to give? Perhaps the following tips will help you increase your generosity:

- Prayerfully meditate on I Tim. 6:17-19. Spend time in confession, repentance and surrender.
- Determine how much you want to give. Make your generosity a firstfruits gift in keeping with your income (1 Cor. 16:2).
- Read *The Generosity Ladder* by Nelson Searcy.
- As you give, focus on the ministries that reflect God's heart. Scripture seems clear that God is interested in evangelism, discipleship, taking care of those who teach us and the poor.

If you would like to grow in your generosity, contact us (info@mbfoundation.com or 800.551.1547) for a free copy of Searcy's great little book, *The Generosity Ladder*. Supplies are limited!

Let us recommit to doing good and being generous with time and money. In doing so, we have the opportunity to experience real life—the life Jesus came to bring (I Tim. 6:19).

Jon C. Wiebe is the president and CEO of MB Foundation, the U.S. Mennonite Brethren stewardship ministry.

As you give, focus on the ministries that reflect God's heart. Scripture seems clear that God is interested in evangelism, discipleship, taking care of those who teach us and the poor.



Joshua Paulus

One man's perspective

Why I am a Christian who doesn't go to church

My name is Joshua Paulus, and I am 25 years old. I believe in Jesus Christ. I am prone to sin. I prefer coffee over tea. I don't like going to church.

Friends, acquaintances and family members have expressed that there is a bit of a paradox in claiming to be a Christian while having objections to the church. They are 100 percent accurate; however, the church that they are speaking of and the church that I have experienced are two different places. To qualify, this is based on my experiences. I do not claim to know the exact state of all churches in existence. This is only one man's perspective based on experiences within a church building and church-based communities.

My opinions are based on three things that I believe about humanity and Christianity. First, I believe that we are called to love one another. Two, we will sin. Three, sin does not want to be discovered. Sin does not want to be seen, acknowledged or found.

I don't like to talk about the things I have done. It's usually embarrassing. I have had two responses from people when trying to express my doubt, struggles, sin, etc. The first response usually results in a long discussion over coffee where the other person asks a lot of questions. The second usually results in a short conversation where the other person makes a lot of statements about me, my future and my post-death lodging situation.

We are prone to tell people black and white statements regarding current issues, personal struggles and their thoughts and activities. Why? It's easy. It's quick. You don't need to invest anything into the situation. Your hands are clean.

Some very amazing men that I knew when I was in high school invited me to spend an

evening with them. They had discovered that I had been physically abusing myself. When I came to the house, I was led to the living room where a chair sat in the middle of the room. They asked me to sit down. They sat in a circle around me.

Two things happened. First, each person took turns speaking truth and affirmation. They told me what they saw in me as a person, things they enjoyed about me, etc. The second thing that happened was they asked me if I would be willing to vocalize why this was happening. Not once did they tell me to stop. Not once did I feel judged. This was the beginning of a long process, but it was pivotal.

This was church. This was healing. This was love.

My experiences post-high school have not been as welcoming. We have fostered a church experience that makes a mold for how Christians should act, and we have no problem telling people that they don't fit. Why don't I like going to church? Because people have no problem telling me why I don't belong and why others don't belong.

Here is my conclusion. Every last human being on Earth is unique. We all have a very interesting story. Our stories are personal, and the church has done a marvelous job of telling people that their story is wrong, sinful and not welcome. If we are sheep being led by the shepherd, then I am as fearful of the sheep that acts like a wolf as the wolf in sheep's clothes.

Joshua Paulus lives in Newton, Kan., and received his bachelor's degree from Tabor College, the Mennonite Brethren College in Hillsboro, Kan., and his master's at Emporia State University.

Giving Tuesday donations surpass USMB goal

On Giving Tuesday, a global day dedicated to giving back, supporters contributed \$54,799 toward U.S. Mennonite Brethren church planting efforts, exceeding the goal of \$30,000 by almost \$25,000. Thanks to the generosity of several anonymous donors, the first \$15,000 in donations were matched.

Mission USA, the church planting arm of USMB, typically contributes \$15,000 toward a new church plant. USMB staff hoped to raise enough funds on Giving Tuesday, Dec. 2, to fund two of the church plants Mission USA hopes to help initiate in 2015. Thanks to the strong giving on Giving Tuesday, funds are in hand for three church plants.

"I want to convey my utmost appreciation for the many donors that took our Giving Tuesday campaign beyond our expectations," says Don Morris, Mission USA director and the USMB interim executive director. "This means that more people will hear the gospel and more people will have a church where they can be nurtured and discipled."

Morris encourages individuals and congregations to continue supporting USMB church planting. "Mission USA currently has 10 ongoing subsidized church plant projects, so the need for funds goes beyond the amount given on Giving Tuesday to plant new churches in 2015," he says. "Please continue to give so that we can not only plant more churches but adequately resource our current projects." —USMB



USMB review continues with "strong consensus"

"Strong consensus" regarding the future ministry of U.S. Mennonite Brethren emerged during a second working retreat, says USMB Leadership Board Chair Steve Schroeder in a written statement following the meeting led by consultant George Bullard and held Nov. 17-18, 2014, in Phoenix, Ariz. A group of nine attendees is fleshing out a possible ministry scenario and will present their summary at meetings of the Leadership Board and Leadership Summit, to be held in March in San Diego, Calif. If these leaders affirm the proposed direction, the board will assign people to further work out structural and organizational details.

"We've intentionally begun a process that we believe will lead to a stronger conference of churches with a unified and well-focused mission," says Schroeder. "We covet continued prayers from those within our family of churches."

The USMB Leadership Board hired Bullard last spring to lead a review of USMB ministries and structures. The first working retreat with Bullard was held Sept. 22-23 in Kansas City.—USMB

NAMED 2015 registration opens

Registration for Named 2015, the next USMB National Youth Conference (NYC), will open this month. NYC is held once every four years; Named 2015 will be April 9-12 in Denver, Colo. For the first time, registration will be online only. The new registration platform is designed for "one deadline, one price, one payment." [The deadline for youth groups to register is March 1](#). This late deadline means youth groups will have more time to raise funds and prepare before registration, but it also means late registrations won't be allowed. Youth leaders must collect individual registrations and payments before this group deadline, then submit one payment for the entire group. For more information, see www.Named2015.com.—NYC

BFL issues update

The USMB Board of Faith and Life (BFL) has issued its fourth open letter regarding Article 13, **Love, Peacemaking and Reconciliation, of the Confession of Faith**. The letter updates USMB constituents on the action BFL has taken since July when delegates to the 2014 USMB National Convention approved a revision of Article 13.

While the board has identified immediate tasks that need to be completed now that the article has been revised, the board has placed a high priority on its hopes to "give life" to Article 13. The letter includes a series of "what if..." statements that imagine how living out Article 13 could transform families, communities, congregations and the world and invites constituents to share ideas for what can be done next. The full letter is available on the USMB website (www.usmb.org). —BFL

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byTheNumbers

Feb. 1 is Super Bowl Sunday!

\$4 million – the cost of a 30-second ad for Super Bowl XLVII

109 – number of paid 30 second ads run during 2014 Super Bowl

\$8,409,928 – amount collected in cash and food items in 2014 for Souper Bowl of Caring, a national movement of young people working to fight hunger and poverty. They ask for \$1 or one food item in connection with Super Bowl Sunday and have raised more than \$100 million since 1990.

Sources: souperbowl.org; aafdf.com

5 minutes with...

LAUREL KING

For 15 years Laurel King of First MB Church in Wichita, Kan., has been leading a school kits drive for Mennonite Central Committee. She is excited about providing school supplies for children around the world, but for King, the project is more about inspiring people to discover the joy of serving others.



Laurel King

1 How many school kits does First MB Church make?

This year it was about 700. But it's not about the numbers. My goal is to get as many kinds of groups involved as I can.

2 Why are school kits a good way of learning service?

Packing school kits is a very simple, concrete project even small kids can accomplish in an hour on a Sunday morning.

3 Who gets involved?

Lots of groups help pack the kits — Sunday school and AWANA classes. Our Prime Timers senior group would do them all if I would let them. And I dole out the fabric to gals in the church to sew the bags.

4 Where do the school supplies come from?

One man in our church gets a pallet full of supplies from Walmart. He keeps it in his garage for me to pick up whenever I have a group ready to pack.

5 What has inspired you?

About five years ago I opened an MCC giving catalog and there was a picture of a beaming boy holding one of our school kits. I recognized the fabric and even had a picture of the fourth graders who had packed that bag. I said, "Lord, thank you. I needed to see that."

6 What do you tell the people who help?

This is an easy project, but I hope this pushes you on to try something out of your comfort zone. We owe God way more than we could ever pay in a lifetime of service. 2 Corinthians 9:12 says, "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God."

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

Leadership Board holds fall meeting

Newly elected board members Lud Hohm, Yale, SD, and Aaron Box, Eugene, Ore., and district ministers (DMs) participated in the October USMB Leadership Board meeting held Oct. 13-14 in Wichita, Kan. Leadership Board chair Steve Schroeder explained that the board believes it will be better able to serve pastors, churches and the district conferences if district ministers are part of the national board. The board heard reports from the DMs and USMB staff and unanimously passed a 2015 budget of \$767,740, a 2.1 percent increase over the 2014 budget.—CL

NPO SCHEDULED FOR MARCH

Lead and staff pastors new to the pastorate or new to USMB and their spouses are invited to attend the National Pastors Orientation to be held March 9-11 in San Diego, Calif. Registration information will be sent in early January; the registration deadline is Feb. 9. The NPO, sponsored by the USMB Board of Faith and Life, provides pastors with the opportunity to connect, to learn about the Mennonite Brethren family and the many resources available and to meet leaders and other pastors.—USMB

Prayer network launched for PA 2015

Mennonite World Conference is establishing a prayer network, recognizing the importance of prayer as preparations are made for PA 2015, the global assembly being planned for July 21-26, 2015, in Harrisburg, Pa. Organizers invite prayer especially for the process of obtaining visas for registrants and for the gift of hospitality for North American host churches and conferences, which include U.S. Mennonite Brethren. For more information or to sign up for email blasts, visit www.mwc-cmm.org/pa2015prayernetwork.—MWC

Central District celebrates

When the Central District Conference (CDC) met for their annual convention Nov. 6-8 in Minot, ND, they celebrated the new things God is doing in their district, including a new church plant and an infusion of financial resources. A significant gift of \$1.2 million from the Katy Glanzer estate will make it possible for the CDC to expand its funding for church planting, among other things. The church planting banquet highlighted Sanctuary Fremont, a new USMB church plant in the greater Omaha, Neb., area, led by Wes and Michele Wilmer.—CL

District youth gather



More than 600 high school students and their sponsors from two USMB districts met for their annual district youth conferences in November. About 145 youth and their sponsors from 11 congregations attended the Central District Youth Conference Nov. 20-23 at Inspiration Hills Camp and Retreat Center in Iowa. Speaker Tom Henderson, from Sioux Falls, SD, spoke on the conference theme, "The Battle," taken from Ephesians 6:12. More than 500 teens and youth workers attended the Southern District Youth Conference Nov. 21-23 in Hillsboro, Kan. Speaker Michael Suderman, (pictured left) a graduate of Tabor College, the Mennonite Brethren college in Hillsboro, addressed the conference theme, "Truth," based on John 8:31-32.—CL

God calls us to love our neighbors even when it hurts

A few months back, the Sunday morning message was on suffering, and we encouraged people to come up for prayer during the last worship song. Rosa, a woman in her early 30s, rushed forward. She held back her tears until she reached the front. One of our staff members met her and listened intently as she poured out her heart.

Rosa said: "I live in this community. We're a half-mile away from the church. I walked here with my five kids. We have a restraining order against my husband. He's an addict and has become abusive. He's in jail now. We are suffering. We don't know how we're going to get through this. How am I going to raise my kids? How are we going to get by? I need help—pray for me."

Our staff member prayed for her as the congregation sang: "Savior, worthy of honor and glory
Worthy of all our praise, you overcame.
Jesus, awesome in power forever
Awesome and great is your name, you overcame."

Rosa walked back to her seat and attempted to sing along. She could not.

After church she grabbed her kids from children's ministry and walked all five of them home by herself. Our staff member called and relayed to me the details of her situation. He

How a single mom with five children changed our church

then asked,
"Would it be
OK if my wife
and I bought some
groceries and drove them
to her apartment tonight and
maybe encourage her?"

"Not a good idea," I said. "The Lord helps those who help themselves."

No wait—that's not what I said. I affirmed him for his awesome idea. So they drove to the store, loaded up the groceries and headed to Rosa's apartment. One of her kids opened the door and yelled back into the apartment, "Mom! Church people are here with food for us!" Rosa came to the door, overwhelmed with gratitude.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a bunch of small, vibrant red flowers, possibly carnations or roses. The hand is positioned in the lower left corner, with the flowers filling most of the frame. The background is plain white.

By John Richardson

“

When we love God and neighbor, when the gifts of the church meet the needs of the world, when we overcome inconvenience and selfishness—we become more and more the spotless bride that Jesus longs for.

”

11

Caring for Rosa

That one Sunday changed our church. Many Sundays we put numerous car seats in our cars and drove to Rosa's apartment to provide a ride for her and her family. We've met the family at the grocery store so that Rosa doesn't have to haul all of the groceries and her kids on multiple city buses to return home. One of our staff members occasionally brings meals for her and the kids.

In August, Rosa had a sidewalk sale to raise money for back-to-school supplies for her kids. When she didn't raise enough money, we were able to buy those supplies. In November we helped her with a down payment for a three-bedroom apartment that is closer to grocery stores and schools.

Her son, Matt, attends the school where our church meets, and he was kicked out of the school because he vandalized our Sunday school room. Now Matt has weekly meetings at the school district office across town. At first, Rosa attempted to get all of the kids to school and her son to the district office once a week. The drive is only 15 minutes—unless you take the bus and then it takes 3 1/2 hours ... one way. This meant Rosa picked up her daughter from kindergarten two hours late.

Rosa had exhausted all of her resources when she called us to see if once a week we could drive her son. When asked, our church people graciously stepped up. We drive Matt to his meeting every week. Oh, and Rosa and her family haven't been able to come to our church for eight months because the district has a policy banning Matt from all district campuses.

Loving our neighbors

I want to be upfront. I am not sharing these stories so that you think I am a part of a really good church. The fact is, I did not want to do any of these things. Every single thing we did to help Rosa and her family was inconvenient. I let nearly every call I received from her go straight to voicemail before calling her back. I was reluctant. I was selfish. And I was wrong.

I once read that the kingdom of God is where the gifts of the church meet the needs of the world. I'm more and more convinced of that reality every day. As followers of Christ, a massive part of our mission as disciples is to give ourselves away in sacrificial love to our neighbors.

Who are our neighbors? Hmm, everyone. The guy in your church who asks you for prayer about the same thing every single week—that is your neighbor. The woman in your church who always answers rhetorical questions out loud—that is your neighbor. The toddler who is crying in the middle of the sermon—that is your neighbor. The side-hugger who always shows up when you're in the middle of a conversation with someone else—that is your neighbor. The pastor of the bigger church across town—that is your neighbor. The single mother of five, who walks to church and whose kid may have vandalized your facility—that is your neighbor.

I've discovered that it is always inconvenient to love my neighbors. I've learned that every person God brings into my life has unsurpassable worth, and that they are worth Jesus dying for. It is irrelevant whether or not they

help increase attendance or help us meet our monthly giving. They are my neighbors, and I am called to love them. The church is not a business where we evaluate how our time affects the bottom line. There is only one bottom line for the church—to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

And here's the good news! When we do that—when we love God and neighbor, when the gifts of the church meet the needs of the world, when we overcome inconvenience and selfishness—we become more and more the spotless bride that Jesus longs for. We shine even brighter amidst the darkness. We become a city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

Do the dance

As a pastor, I am privileged to help lead the way in sacrificial love. But for me, this plays out much like a slow dance in junior high school. I'm in step with the music, then I step on some toes. Then I'm grooving again, and I try a dance move that is too difficult and every one just stares at me. Did I just use the word "grooving"? I am my mother!

An example may help.

Every Sunday morning I park my car very far away from our church so as to give others the best spots. (I'm moving with the music.)

But then I get a certain amount of satisfaction from knowing that everyone who sees my car parked so far away thinks I am a great servant leader. (Out of sync and stepping on toes.)

I change parking spots, hiding my car from sight so that no one thinks more highly of me than they should. (Back in sync. Grooving with the music. There's that word again.)

I write an article for *Christian Leader* explaining in detail how I hide my car from sight so as not to look more spiritual, therefore proving how humble and spiritual I really am. (Out of sync. And I've now started doing the "Carlton" and everybody is thinking how attention-hungry I am.)

I believe we're called to be the church when it hurts... when it is inconvenient... when it is difficult...and when it doesn't help our "bottom line." The God we serve, with his last dying breath, forgave the very people who were nailing him to the cross. If ever there was an inconvenient and difficult time to love others, it was then.

So go. Do this dance. Love God. Love your neighbors, and give yourself away in sacrificial love for the world. And when you find yourself out of sync with the Spirit, pause, listen and get back to loving Jesus and others. There is no doubt that you'll discover you're shining significantly brighter than you were before.

John Richardson is the pastor of Mountain View Community Church Sunnyside in Fresno, Calif. Sunnyside was initiated out of Mountain View Community Church in partnership with the Pacific District Conference and Mission USA. Richardson will be the speaker at Named 2015, the national Mennonite Brethren youth conference April 9-12 in Denver, Colo.

Dying to others, **DISCOVERING** much more

By Jan Johnson

Moving away from
self-centeredness to
caring deeply for others

Would I or wouldn't I say it? My friend had just bought a new specialty Bible—one with notes—and was showing me what she liked about it. But I couldn't hear her because my mind was jammed with thoughts of telling her that I had written many of that Bible's notes and introductory articles. When she asked me a question, I realized I was too busy listening to the argument in my mind to hear my friend. So I looked directly into her eyes, knowing she wanted my attention. Loving her meant letting go of my self-congratulatory thoughts so I listened carefully as she repeated her question.

To die to self is to set aside what we want in this moment and to focus instead on loving God with everything we've got and valuing others as highly as we value ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39). This moves us away from self-centeredness and closer to becoming open-hearted followers of Christ who care deeply for others. It's much easier to pay attention to the concerns, interests and needs of people when our own interests no longer consume us.

Jesus describes the dying-to-self process (to "deny self" is the exact scriptural phrase) as part of following him: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). But dying

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2016

A photograph of two women sitting on a porch, smiling and engaged in conversation. One woman is wearing a green shirt and the other is wearing a striped top. A large, semi-transparent white box contains a quote.

"It's much easier to pay attention to the concerns, interests and needs of people when our own interests no longer consume us."

to self isn't bleak and terrible. Jesus continues: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (v. 25).

In dying to self, we find genuine life by depending on God who provides much more than we can imagine. Likewise "a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24, NASB). Part of the life that we find and fruit we bear is not only living a richer life with God but also becoming more generous to others, reaching out to them with love and joy.

Sometimes people mistake dying to self for death of self. But self-denial is not self-rejection. God treasures your divinely created self. God works within you and reshapes you into the person your renewed-in-Christ self would really like to be: not selfish with what you own, not concerned about how circumstances affect only you and not crabby when others seem to get what you want.

What dying to self looks like

As we die to self, we no longer try to get our own way or to get people to look up to us. We stop offering unasked-for advice, as if in self-importance we think we always know better than others. We let go of trying to make a good impression on others. We find freedom from the self-focused life writer Evelyn Underhill describes: "We mostly spend [our] lives conjugating three verbs: to want, to have and to do. Craving, clutching and fussing, we are kept in perpetual unrest." Quite simply, we're no longer obsessed with self.

Dying to self actually makes life easier because, for example, we can be content even when we're overlooked. Several years ago I led a woman through a one-on-one 10-week time of study, conversation and prayer about becoming a disciple of Jesus. When she announced in church that she had decided to give her life to Christ, she talked about the people who had influenced her. I thought she would mention my name, but she didn't. I considered standing up as if to go to the bathroom—so she would notice me! But I knew the Spirit (not me) had done a great work in her life. I also saw this as an exercise in dying to self by not squeezing myself into the spotlight.

Could I honor others above myself? (Rom 12:10) But this issue goes deeper: Could I be secure in

God's love without public recognition? Could I let God be in charge of my reputation? Was God's approval enough for me? After this early experiment in dying to self, I eventually found myself relying on God more in small things. I was finding life—the companionship and partnership with God I longed for.

A next step

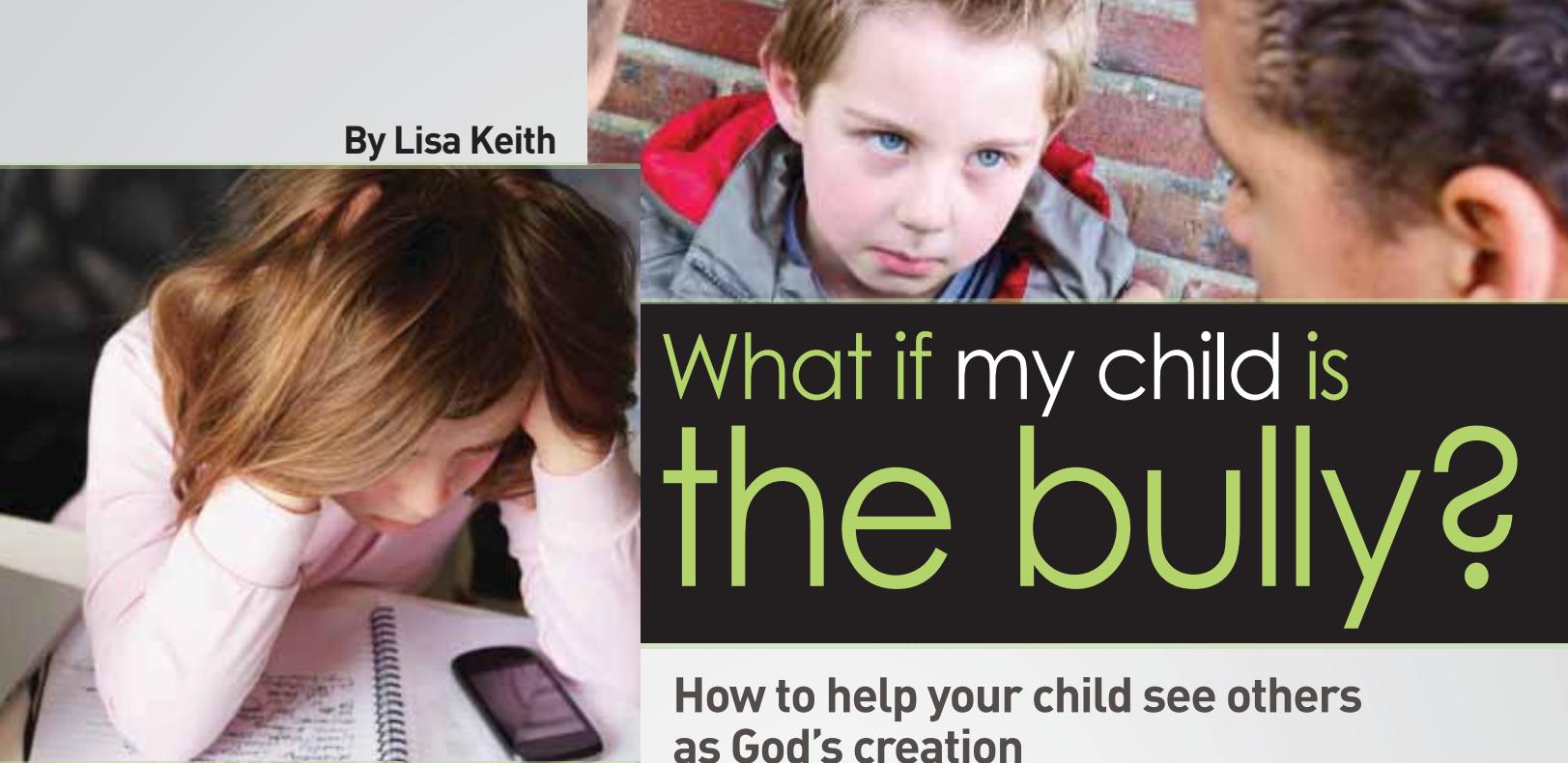
Start simple, start small. Ask God how you might deny yourself a little something every day: fasting from sweets; not being defensive when attacked; not buying the latest phone you really want because your current one is fine. As you follow through with these choices, watch how God meets your needs and you find life. You forget about the sweets as you engage someone in conversation; you find that someone else sticks up for you; you're relieved you don't have to struggle to learn how to use a new phone!

These daily behind-the-scenes denials train us to be selfless in small ways so that when we find ourselves in bigger struggles of faith, we more easily set aside our self-focused desires and think about others instead.

One small death-to-self God has led me into is to stay away from the women's clothing racks when I shop at a certain discount store. The clothes are such deals—inexpensive and up-to-date. The first time I sensed God inviting me to do this I paused in the aisle that led toward the clothes. If I stepped any closer, I knew I'd find something I supposedly needed. What if I skipped it just for today? I have 10 times more clothes than many people in this world who own just a few changes of clothing. So I walked away.

Since then, it's become easier. Now it's freeing not to clutter up my schedule and closet buying things I don't need. These small self-denials train my character away from self-indulgence and result in giving me more time and resources to seek God and what God is doing in others' lives (loose paraphrase of Matt. 6:33). This is the routinely easy and light-burdened, light-yoked life I have wanted.

Jan Johnson (www.JanJohnson.org) is a speaker and author of many books including Invitation to the Jesus Life and Abundant Simplicity. This article is reprinted with the author's permission.



By Lisa Keith

What if my child is the bully?

How to help your child see others as God's creation

I couldn't believe what I was hearing from around the corner in our small house. My daughter, then age 10, was telling her seven-year-old sister that if she didn't do the evening chores for her, the older sibling would tell all the kids at school about a terrifying secret my youngest had been keeping. This wasn't the first time I'd heard my daughter verbally threaten another child.

Much has been written on the topic of what to do if your child is being bullied in school or the neighborhood. But what if your child is the bully? Not so much. I have learned much about children, bullying and peacemaking in the years since that incident.

What do we need to know as parents?

Although conflict is a normal part of any relationship, bullying is not. There are many reasons why a child might act aggressively through bullying such as having a hard time dealing with frustration, impulsivity, behavior learned on the playground from a peer, even divorce. As parents, we want to know how to abate or prevent such behavior in our children.

Christian psychologist and author Angela Sabates says that, "Of prime importance here (in dealing with bullying) is the concept of humanizing others—considering their dignity and value as humans and treating them with moral consideration." She points to the redemptive work of Christ as central to humanizing others and reaching a point of reconciliation.

What is bullying?

But let's back up for a minute. What constitutes bullying or aggression? Mark Prever, British author and child counselor, attributes the following characteristics to bullying:

- Hurtful behavior where harm is intended
- Occurring over a period of time, repetitive or serial in nature, and
- Involving an imbalance of power where victims are often unable to defend themselves.

Bullying can take the form of physical aggression, verbal insults and gestures and social ostracizing. If continued over a long period of time, very real mental health consequences may ensue for both the bully and the victim, including embedding this negative behavior in future relationships.

Why do we bully?

Society at large, through media such as video games, advertising and film, often dehumanizes individuals or groups that have certain stigmatizing characteristics. When we see others as less-than, we are unable to form a meaningful connection with them. When this happens in children, a child can feel superior and that can lead to bullying. This dehumanizing effect gives the bully the notion that society condones the treatment of some others without compassion or empathy.

Let's face it, most of us have engaged in aggressive acts of one kind or another—gossip, shunning, cutting someone off in traffic. When our children see us do these things, they are inferring the value—or lack of value—of others from our actions. How might a peacemaking perspective contribute to a solution to this nationwide problem?

What does Scripture say?

Let's look at how Scripture addresses aggression. Ephesians 4:26 tells us, "In your anger do not sin." It is quite normal to be angry or frustrated, and God recognizes this, but how we act on the negative emotions is what makes the difference. We know that Jesus too felt anger and yet did not sin. Furthermore, in Romans 12:10, Jesus



admonishes us to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. He goes on to tell us, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Rom. 12:18).

The belief that all human beings have an innate worth and value is the basis for a peacemaking perspective. Sabates also believes that all “humans have the capacity for other-centeredness” which, she says, is at the core of the creation, fall and redemption view. This “other-centeredness” is the ability to feel empathy; to put another’s needs before your own.

All human beings have worth as children of God and all of us have the capacity within ourselves to put another’s needs first. Since aggression toward others comes from a worldview in which others are dehumanized, we must humanize others for our children to see and we must teach the values of empathy, compassion and self-sacrifice—Agape love.

One way to accomplish this is by restoring the relationship between the bully and the victim. The bully must come to see the victim not as less-than but as inherently valuable, one of God’s creation. Jesus specifically includes all persons in his ministry, even those on the edges of society: the Samaritans (Luke 10:25-37), the lepers (Luke 17:11-19) and even tax collectors (Mark 2:16). “Christianity combats dehumanization by extending the right of personhood to all humans,” says Sabates.

Helping children make amends

There are five steps to resolving or reconciling a child who bullies to her/his victim.

1. Help your child to see others as Jesus sees them. Teach Jesus’ love in whatever age-appropriate ways you can. Teach your child that God loves all those we may see as different than our family or ourselves.

2. Help your child to find empathy. Do some role-playing. Ask “How would you feel if someone did that to you?” Or “What if that happened to your sister (or brother)?”

3. Give your child the words to admit their wrongdoing. Help your child know what to say to admit their part in the conflict. Write it down and practice it aloud with them.

4. Assist your child in reconciling himself or herself to the victim, if possible. Mennonite minister and

FPU Professor Ron Claassen and his wife, Roxanne, have written the textbook *Discipline that Restores*. Although meant for the classroom, the book outlines a restorative process to repair relationships that can be used almost anywhere. Here are the steps to reconciliation they suggest: The bully must admit wrongdoing and make restitution.

The victim and bully must decide whether they will reach a resolution of the situation by themselves, with a mediator’s assistance or with a mediator making the decisions.

Those involved should write a contract, outlining what will be different going forward and giving a date when the mediator (parents or school official) will check back with those involved to make sure the agreement is still being followed.

5. Teach your child explicitly that those who may be different from us still deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect. Your child may benefit from participating in community service—such as volunteering at Special Olympics or a homeless shelter or working with the elderly—to learn what it means to be vulnerable and to meet others who may appear different in a wide selection of environments.

It is also important to model to our children appropriate ways to express negative emotions, such as anger or frustration, and exactly how to apologize. This modeling is perhaps the most important lesson I have learned about parenting.

As a special education teacher who has worked for more than 10 years with adolescents with emotional disturbance, I have come to know how essential it is to live my values out loud, in front of my students and my own children. My daughter is now 22. She still gets frustrated and angry, but handling her anger is becoming a bit easier with each progressing year.

Finally, be sure to enrich your child’s life with a variety of experiences in connection with others. Such experiences illustrate that even though we may be different on the outside, we are all human beings on the inside and are loved by an awesome God.

A 20-year veteran special education teacher, Lisa Clark Keith currently teaches full time at Fresno Pacific University in the School of Education. She lives in Fresno, Calif., with her three daughters, 19, 22 and 24, and attends Butler MB Church.

Books about bullying

For children:

- ❑ *Confessions of a Former Bully* by Trudy Ludwig
- ❑ *The Feelings Book: The Care and Keeping of Your Emotions* by Dr. Lynda Madison

For parents:

- ❑ *Bullying Hurts: Teaching Kindness Through Read Alouds and Guided Conversations* by Lester L. Laminack
- ❑ *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From Preschool to High School—How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle* by Barbara Coloroso
- ❑ *The Bully and Me: Stories that Break the Cycle of Torment*, by Helen Carmichael Porter

Passing the baton

Ministry and friendship comes full circle for Ensz, Larson

When teenager Kevin Larson boarded a bus to Mexico to serve with the youth group of Garden Valley Church (GVC), Garden City, Kan., he had no idea that Steve Ensz was the youth pastor.

"He thought I was the bus driver," Ensz says.

It was a rather inauspicious beginning. Neither would've predicted that they would now minister side-by-side at GVC.

Larson had been invited to be part of GVC's annual mission trip by a friend and admittedly wasn't there with the best of motives. "I just really wanted to go to Mexico," Larson remembers. He saw the trip as an adventure and opportunity to meet pretty girls.

Ensz, meanwhile, "had serious questions" about letting Larson join the trip. After all, he rarely attended youth group, was known as a "character" and, frankly, wouldn't contribute much to the construction project at hand.

But Ensz knew the mission trip wasn't really about the construction project, and he believed that no student came by coincidence. He was right.

Larson says, "I didn't go to meet Jesus, but I did meet Jesus." He was welcomed into the tight-knit group and saw his peers living for Christ. Although he had grown up going to church, "it was the first time I realized that Christianity was not just going to church on Sundays."

From bus driver to mentor

Shortly after, Larson was baptized by Ensz. Larson "lived for youth group," read his Bible voraciously, participated in all youth group events and "pretty much did whatever Steve told me to do." Larson says he knew Ensz cared about him and was praying for him, and he often sought Ensz's wisdom on the kinds of questions typical to teens. "I knew that his office was always open," Larson says.

As he began to consider life after high school, he sensed a call to youth ministry. "I saw how huge an influence Steve had in my life," Larson says, "and I saw how much fun he was having!" He chose to pursue this call at Tabor College, the Mennonite Brethren liberal arts college in Hillsboro, Kan.

Ensz's influence followed him there. Throughout youth group, Ensz had emphasized daily time in Scripture. "I realized that if I want to disciple youth, they've got to get into the Word regularly," Ensz says. Larson took that lesson to heart, making time in Scripture and prayer a part of his daily life long after he was no longer part of the youth group.

The two men continued to keep in touch through phone calls and visits. That figurative office door was still open, and Larson continued to seek Ensz's advice when he faced struggles. "Steve's presence was huge," Larson says.

When distance prevented Ensz from being a daily influence, others picked up where he left off. Larson lists Tabor professors Wendell Loewen and Lynn Jost as among those who "poured into" him. An internship at Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., with pastors Gaylord Goertzen and Vaughn Jost allowed him to test and confirm his calling to ministry. "God surrounded me with godly, great men to learn from and lean on," Larson says.

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Emily Hubbard

Steve Ensz, right, literally passed a baton to Kevin Larson, left, when Larson was installed as the youth pastor at Garden Valley Church two years ago. Ensz has been a mentor to Larson since the younger man was a high school student. The baton was chosen as a symbol for the transition because Larson was a runner at Tabor College.

From mentor to peer

Larson graduated from Tabor with a degree in youth ministry, married his college sweetheart, Jill, and took his first ministry job all within about three weeks in 2007. He served as youth pastor at a Presbyterian church in Leoti, Kan., a small town with a sizeable youth ministry. And no bus, Larson notes.

As he developed the ministry, he remembered the core elements that Ensz modeled—Scripture and mission—and built upon that same foundation.

The relationship between the two men changed to peers. The men talked on the phone often, and their conversations were more give-and-take than ever. They found they were often dealing with similar issues. Larson saw Ensz as a safe person to bounce ideas off of; Ensz appreciated Larson's perspective as someone closer in age to the youth.

"We were equals," Larson says.

Ministry partners

Their relationship changed yet again in 2012, when Ensz stepped into the senior pastor role at GVC. Of course, that left open the youth pastor position.

As a natural part of the search process, church leaders put out feelers to several former GVC students, including Larson. He said no. The ministry in Leoti was going well, and it didn't feel like the right time to make a change.

Then Larson called Ensz with a ministry question, as he often did. The conversation wandered to the open position at GVC, and "a 10-minute phone call turned into an hour," as Larson says.

Before he knew it, he and Jill were meeting with the GVC leadership, trying to discern if returning to GVC might be God's plan for them.

Larson says the thought of trying to step into the role Ensz had filled for 22 years gave him pause. "Those were huge shoes to fill," he says.

But he also knew that he loved the church and the community. He appreciated that GVC supports their youth as a vital ministry. And he knew that he'd work side-by-side with Ensz. "The thing that sold me was the partnership with Steve," he says.

So Larson was installed as youth pastor at GVC in August 2013. During the service, Ensz passed a literal baton to Larson, symbolizing the leadership transition.

"It's been a dream come true," Larson says, although both men readily admit it hasn't been without challenges. For Larson, that fear of filling big shoes remains. For Ensz, it means letting go when Larson does it differently.

The two men now consider themselves partners in ministry. They collaborate on teaching from time to time, talk about Sunday morning preparations regularly and share ideas constantly. They find their gifts complement one another.

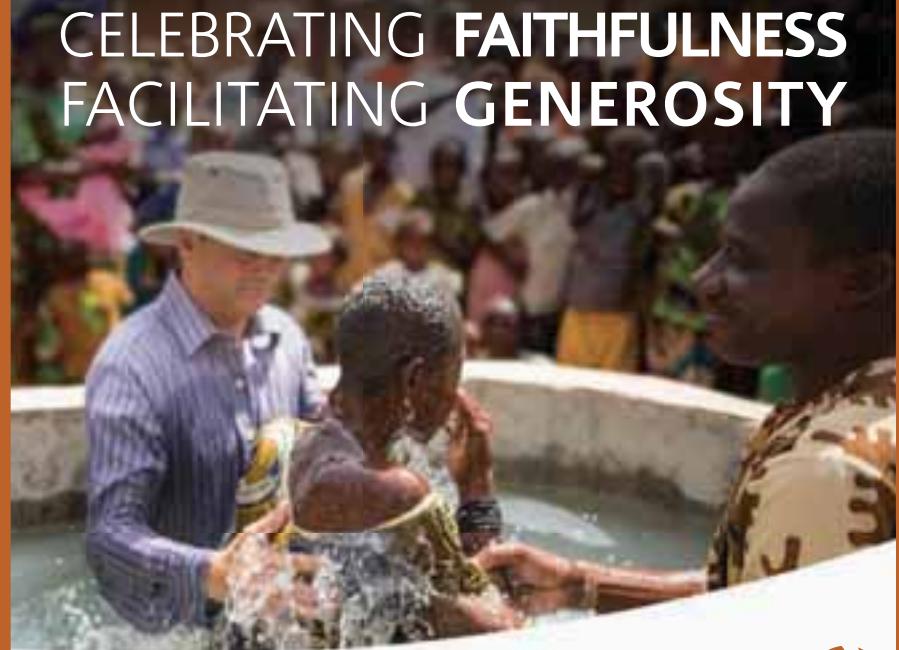
"Usually we find that there's wisdom and creativity in putting our minds together," Ensz says.

Still, both chuckle when they think how their relationship has come full circle.

"It's crazy to think I'm back here, but I love it," Larson says. He wonders aloud if Ensz prayed long ago that he would become a ministry leader.

"I'll be honest; I didn't pray that way," Ensz says. He simply prayed that Larson, like others in the youth group, would follow Christ. Their current partnership is "only by the grace of God," he says. "It's exciting to be part of God's work."

As for Larson, when he thinks back on his journey to ministry, the lesson is pretty simple: "I have a real hard time telling kids they can't get on the bus." —Myra Holmes



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United for a safe community

Small congregation impacts community beyond its size

The Goliath they face in their southeast Fresno, Calif., neighborhood is huge—gang violence, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and more—but just like David in the biblical story, the small Mennonite Brethren congregation of United Faith Christian Fellowship is boldly stepping up to the challenge.

The violence hit home with force a couple of years ago when a neighborhood house was hit by gunfire in a gang altercation, part of a weekend cluster of violent incidents in the community. The home belonged to the parents of a young woman in their church family and shook up the congregation.

Under the leadership of co-pastors Jim and Yammilette Rodriguez, the church responded by holding a press conference to protest the violence and embark on a campaign for peace and justice in their community. Their Fresno city council member, the chief of police and other local officials joined them on the front steps of the church to meet the media and demonstrate solidarity in countering community violence.

For this 60-member bilingual congregation, partnerships with government agencies, nonprofit groups, businesses and caring individuals in Fresno have been the key to impacting their community on a scale far beyond their size.

After the press conference, Yammilette Rodriguez helped the youth of the church, a handful of high school students, secure a grant from the California Endowment to survey the community on issues related to health. They were not surprised to find links between violence and health issues.

Among the problems the survey revealed was the above-average availability of alcohol in the area. “Crime increases in a community where there are more liquor stores,” Yammilette points out. “[Our survey] found that

there were over 35 liquor stores within one mile of Roosevelt High School,” she says.

“There’s a saturation of messages about alcohol in this neighborhood,” adds Janet Saucedo, a Fresno Pacific University political science major who currently leads the youth advocacy efforts. Advertisements for alcohol are part of an environment that contributes to unhealthy choices, she explains. Changing the environment can help people make healthier choices.

“We’re a community, so we’re all responsible for the health of our community,” says Saucedo.

In addition to problems, the youth’s survey uncovered assets in their neighborhood, identifying partners who would work with them. “When we did the door knocking we found neighbors who care, who are looking out for each other,” says Yammilette. “Some will just leave the area if they feel unsafe, but we at the church want to work with our neighbors who love where they live and together do whatever we can to make it better.”

The small group of high schoolers who conducted the original survey has grown to an advocacy team of a dozen students from junior high through college, along with adult advisors. They’ve chosen the name South East Neighborhood Transformation (SENT).

Women from the community are welcome to shop at My Sister’s Closet, a classroom at United Faith Christian Fellowship that is fully stocked with quality used clothing suitable for interview and office jobs. Helping the unemployed is just one way that this Fresno, Calif., congregation is bringing peace to their neighborhood.



"What we're working on is making our community a better place," says Saucedo, noting that their acronym, SENT, reflects their sense of calling to this work.

Under Saucedo's leadership the youth have continued to work with the city officials who partnered with them in the press conference. Their research and knowledge of the community make them a vital resource for a city council task force exploring ways to make Fresno's neighborhoods healthier and safer. One concrete result of their input has been increased enforcement of city codes limiting the way alcohol is advertised in store windows.

Mobilizing the church's youth to advocate for change in the community requires them to think far into the future, says Yammilette. "We may not see the results for 10 or 15 years," she admits.

Along the way they celebrate the accomplishments that move them a step toward the team's goal of a healthy community for themselves and their children. At a recent town hall meeting hosted by United Faith, 60 community people heard about the city council's efforts to tighten alcohol and tobacco advertising restrictions. With funding from other community resources, the advocacy team has produced a video that communicates their mission.

In addition to advocating for the future, the church has formed partnerships to address immediate and tangible needs in their community. Several local grocery stores supply a weekly bread distribution. Under the leadership of assistant pastor Rene Quintanilla the church becomes a gathering place on Saturday mornings as people pick up their bread and often stay for coffee and conversation with others in the neighborhood.

According to Quintanilla, it is a way for the church to "let them know they have a place they can come to when they have problems and issues."

Even prior to the community survey, the church had responded to the economic downturn with a ministry to unemployed women in the community. My Sister's Closet is a resource for women as they seek and prepare for employment. A classroom at the church is fully stocked with quality used

clothing suitable for interviews and office jobs, thanks to partnerships with women from churches and professional organizations around the city.

Twice a year My Sister's Closet hosts a training day for job seekers with workshops on job search techniques, interview skills and resume writing. Led by women who have become business owners and professionals themselves, the trainings offer inspiration as well as practical help.

At the end of the training, participants go home with three clothing outfits along with shoes and accessories, ready to look the part for their next job interview.

Yammilette acknowledges that with so much energy going to community needs, the church doesn't have some of the programs other churches offer. "Our mission is to really serve the neighborhood, and it's folks who want to serve others who come to join us," she says.

Neighborhood people as well as city and service agencies throughout Fresno and beyond have become partners with United Faith to work toward a safe and healthy community. "It takes many groups coming together for the same purpose," says Jim Rodriguez. "At the end of the day we all want safe neighborhoods." —Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

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Pass it forward

South Dakota congregation practices generosity



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Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, SD, has a history as a giving church. The church and its members faithfully give to district, educational, national, global and local ministries. But since January 2014, the congregation has been kicking the giving up a notch with "Pass It Forward," which challenges attendees to give in a new way.

The idea for Pass It Forward began with a sermon and a local Christian radio station. In December 2013, Pastor Mike Petts preached a sermon on Jesus as the way, truth, life, light and new covenant. His wife, Diane, picked up on the "light" portion and began to pray about how their congregation could be a light in their community.

Meanwhile, the local Christian radio station was encouraging listeners to "pay it forward"—to show the love of Christ to a stranger by, say, paying for the meal of the next person in the drive-through. Diane thought the idea could be expanded to impact both their congregation and the community. With the support of the church deacons, Salem's Pass It Forward ministry was born.

The premise is simple: On the first Sunday of each month, one family in the church receives an envelope in their church mailbox. The envelope contains a sum of money—anywhere from \$5 to \$100—instructions and a response sheet. The family who receives the envelope has a month to "pass it forward" by finding someone in need and using the money to help or encourage them.

The money cannot be given to regular church ministries or missionaries, church offerings or any organization. While Salem attendees are known to be generous, this exercise is intended to challenge them to actively look for individuals around them.

"It's easy to give to regular ministries, and it's easy to put money in an envelope and send it off," Diane Petts says. "This is coming face to face with people in need."

The instructions include examples of how the money might be used:

- Pay a month of someone's electricity bill.
- Look for someone who has a downcast demeanor and slip the money in their pocket.
- Pay for someone's meal behind you in the drive-through.
- Pay someone's grocery bill.

- Pay for someone's driveway to be shoveled.
- Offer to pay for a vehicle bill at the local car repair shop.
- Buy a bag of groceries, place it on the doorstep at someone's house and watch for their response.

Gifts can be anonymous, but don't have to be. If not, givers are instructed to credit God: "Make sure you let them know that it came from God, not from you. Simply say, 'I want to give to show God's love to you.'"

The instruction sheet says, "This will require time; it will require observation; it will require a dedication on your part to participate. We are excited to see how God will work in our lives and in the lives of others from this show of passing on of his love."

At the end of the month, the giver records how they used the money, their response and the response of the recipient (if known) on the response card, then replenishes the funds with their choice of \$5 to \$100 and returns the envelope to the pastor to be passed along to the next family. The range of dollar amounts is specified to be sensitive to those who can't afford to give much as well as to curtail any tendencies toward competition to give more. "That's not the goal," Petts say.

Not surprisingly, some have responded to the challenge with enthusiasm; others with more apprehension. "It's a challenge for people to look outside themselves and to actively look for someone (to give to)," Petts says. She then adds, "There's nothing wrong with getting out of our comfort zone."

About 10 months into Pass It Forward, about \$850 had been distributed to nine families in the community in the form of clothing, food and cash. "So far, Salem MB Church has risen to the challenge before them," says Petts.

Only Mike and Diane Petts, who are responsible for choosing the next family to receive the envelope, know who receives the envelope each month, which protects the privacy of the church families and the anonymity of those they give to. Responses are printed anonymously in the bul-

letin from time to time, as an encouragement and as a reminder to pray for the family with the envelope that month.

"We immediately thought of a family to give to," says one response. "It is a joy to help them in this way."

Another writes, "I was so blessed by seeing the children's faces of happiness."

One of the early recipients of the envelope says her first response was excitement: "How can I use this? What can I do for somebody?" For her, finding someone was relatively easy, and giving was clearly a joy. "I think God calls us to be givers," she says. "That's kind of a no-brainer. That's what he's done for us, and to whom much is given, I think much is required."

Another couple who has participated says their first response was, "Oh, my, it's our turn!" They didn't take the responsibility lightly, but prayed and discussed several possibilities before deciding where to give the envelope money. They say that part of the benefit of Pass It Forward for them was practice in seeking God's direction as they discerned where to give and how much to put back in the envelope. In their case, they gave part of the money anonymously and part of it in person. One unexpected result is that this simple sharing of Christ's love has sparked an ongoing relationship with one recipient, who now "knows we care."

The wife of the couple says the experience has opened her eyes to needs around her and inspired her to act rather than just passing by. "I'm more aware of the opportunities and situations where I could've stepped up," she says. "I'm more alert to that now."

Salem's Pass It Forward will continue until each of the approximately 30 families in the congregation has had a chance to participate, a little over two years in total.

"Only God knows what seeds have been planted," says Petts. "If we reach one family, if we make a difference in one family to draw them to Christ or to give them encouragement and let them know that someone cares, then the whole procedure is worth it." —*Myra Holmes*

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Don Morris
Mission USA director

God will make a roadway

God promises to do something new as we follow him

In 1998, my wife, Janna, and I loaded all of our possessions into the biggest yellow Ryder rental truck we could find and left the family farm near Ulysses, Kan., and headed for Fresno, Calif., and MB Biblical Seminary (now Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary).

Janna and I thought we would live out our lives as farmers, but God had other plans. For four years I wrestled with God pertaining to his call. As I struggled with the decision to move to Fresno to obtain the necessary education, God provided a verse that has since become my lifetime verse: Isaiah 43:19. The translation I learned then says, “Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth, will you not be made aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, a river in the desert” (NASB).

That verse became the bedrock for building our faith as we prepared to move away from the farm and from family. Our three children were ages 11, eight and five at the time, and we knew moving halfway across the country was going to be a huge change for them. We had no jobs lined up once we arrived in Fresno. How was this all going to work? God kept reminding us, “Behold, I will do something new....”

As we pulled out of the drive and headed down the dirt road to the highway, there was still a lot of apprehension. I drove the truck and Janna followed behind in our car.

When we got to Kingman, Ariz., I still had a quarter tank of gas, and I thought we could easily make it to Needles, Calif. Well, two miles outside of

Needles and with an eighth of a tank showing on the faulty gas gauge, that big Ryder truck sputtered, coughed and died—out of gas. The truck began to slow down, and using our CB radios Janna loudly exclaimed from her car, “What are you doing?”

“I’m coasting,” I said.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because I ran out of gas.”

“You what?!!”

Now for those of you familiar with Needles you know that it lies in a depression. So for two miles that truck coasted down the highway toward the desert city. When I exited onto the off ramp, I could see that the stoplight at the end of the ramp was red. My two oldest kids were with me, and their eyes were as big as saucers by this time. We got down to the end of the ramp and the light turned green! There was no one in front of us so I allowed the truck to keep coasting.

We slowly ambled across the four-lane highway before us and up a shallow incline to a Texaco station. The momentum of the truck barely kept us going until the truck died—exactly at the pump. And even though this is now a comical story to recall, at that moment I sat there and cried. “I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, a river in the desert,” God reminded me.

Those words were true thousands of years ago for the people of Israel. They were true for us in 1988 at a gas station in Needles, and they are true for us today. Are you in a desert? God will make a roadway!

When asked to choose between contrasting words to describe their vision of the ideal church, a majority of Millennials, those born between 1981-1996, chose the following:

- ◀ 78 % selected **COMMUNITY** over **privacy**
- ◀ 77 % selected **SANCTUARY** over **auditorium**
- ◀ 67% chose **CLASSIC** over **trendy**

Did YOU know?

- ◀ 65% chose **QUIET** over **loud**
- ◀ 64% chose **CASUAL** over **dignified**
- ◀ 60% chose **MODERN** over **traditional**

Announcing the birth of a new plant

Church planters moving to downtown Fresno in January

Anew USMB church plant, Neighborhood Church, is being established in an area of downtown Fresno, Calif., known as the Jackson Neighborhood. Church planters Joe and Heidi White and their three children are moving to this predominantly Hispanic community in January 2015. The Pacific District Conference (PDC) and Mission USA, the church planting arm of USMB, are supporting Neighborhood Church.

While serving for the past eight years as associate pastoral couple of Granville Chapel in Vancouver, BC, Joe and Heidi felt an increasing burden and call to ministry specifically in the Jackson Neighborhood. The couple foresees expansion to other Fresno neighborhoods in the future.

In a proposal to the PDC and Mission USA, Joe writes, "Why the name 'Neighborhood Church?' We think the church needs to get entangled with the neighborhood. We think the church needs to love it and invite imagination for how to announce Jesus' incredible message. We think church is about family and local community—our church isn't above our neighborhood, we are a church of our neighborhood."

Don Morris, director of Mission USA, says, "Joe and Heidi have a very strong call to this challenging neighborhood. They are willing and excited about the opportunities that lie before them.

Moving from Vancouver to Fresno will be a huge adjustment for their whole family. But I am confident in the gifts God has blessed them with to do a great work in Fresno—they are both very gifted people."

Residents of the Jackson neighborhood experience many life challenges, including living in one of the lowest per capita income areas of Fresno. White writes, "There are 920 homes in the Jackson Neighborhood, and we want our neighbors to walk and bike to a vibrant and fun Jesus-focused

worship service and midweek small groups. We dream of a church that addresses the 18 percent unemployment rate in this area of Fresno. What's motivating us? We want to see Jesus transform the lives of residents in our neighborhood and participate in Jesus' renewal of Fresno, the city we love."

White was raised in the Lowell Neighborhood of Fresno, which shaped his life and ministry: "I am relationally shaped as a 'Fresnan.' Like my home city, I am unpretentious and unable to hide my problems but am inherently optimistic about and committed to redemption. I am also shaped by the Lowell Neighborhood, the neighborhood in which I grew up (one of Fresno's highest crime and lowest income neighborhoods). This has given me a heart for the poor, a cultural awareness, a realistic perspective of how Jesus' kingdom comes and an honest perspective of my own brokenness and wounding as a man saved by grace."

White is an avid mountaineer, rock climber, ironman triathlete, marathon runner, violinist, guitarist and coffee enthusiast. His first book, *Lead Better*, aims to help youth pastors lead effective inductive Bible studies with teens and will be published in early 2015 by Harmon Press. He is a graduate of Fresno Pacific University and received a master of divinity degree from Regent College, Vancouver, BC.



Neighborhood Church

Joe White and his family are returning to White's hometown of Fresno, Calif., this month to plant a new USMB church



Sara Kopper

Helping children understand grief

Five ways to help children when someone they love dies

Grief is a different experience for everyone, but for all of us, it can be life changing and overwhelming. Children need help and support from loving adults to figure out how to navigate these emotions when they have lost parents, grandparents, siblings or friends.

For parents or caregivers, figuring out how to help a child move through this grief process can be very confusing. Parents may be in their own tailspin of emotions as they too react to the death of the loved one. Children going through grief need reassurance of their own safety and that of their loved ones.

Children need one-on-one time from parents. Death shakes the child's security. Parents can help with this by putting away their electronics and setting aside time each day to snuggle with or talk with their child. Children need permission to talk about the loved one, to bring up their questions about death and to know that their surviving loved ones care about them. If you as a parent are unable to provide that time (perhaps due to your own grief), ask a family member or close friend to spend special time with that child.

Children need structure and routine. In the midst of reacting to the death, predictability and consistency help the child to feel safe and stable. Parents need to be sure to be on time to pick up their children from events — arriving late can cause increased anxiety about the safety of a loved one. Keeping the child involved with normal activities helps the child to have a rhythm to life again.

Children need a chance to say goodbye. If it is possible, even before the loved one dies, allow the child to talk to the loved one even if by phone or online. This will help the child to have closure. If a death is sudden and there is no chance for this, allow the child to draw or write a letter to the loved one. Follow your

child's lead with how to say this goodbye and do not judge the feelings written to the loved one, but allow the child full expression.

Children need to be included in planning for special times. Ask your child or children about how they want to celebrate holidays and birthdays. Some family traditions may be important to continue even without the loved one. Other times children may need a new tradition to be created. Parents need to be physically and emotionally present at these difficult times.

Consider these ideas to help children grieve.

There are many ways to help children grieve. Consider these suggestions:

- Create a blanket using clothing from the loved one.
- Make handprints while a sick loved one is still alive. Write memories of the loved one in the handprint.
- Take a photo of the child and the loved one. Frame it with extra matting, and write or draw memories around the photo.
- Create a stuffed animal using clothing from a loved one.
- Pick a song with the child to help him/her remember the loved one. Allow the child to play the song when missing the person.
- Offer art supplies so the child can create a symbol to remember the loved one.

If grief continues, find a professional. When given support to express their feelings, children are usually very resilient. If, as a caregiver, you see signs of concern that the grief is going on longer than two to three months or the grief is significantly affecting the child in school or home life, consider making an appointment with a mental health professional familiar with grief. Sometimes children need an adult outside the family to express the mixed emotions of sadness, anger, denial and guilt that can come with a death.

*Sara Kopper is a clinician and licensed specialist clinical social worker, registered play therapist and certified trauma specialist at Prairie View, a faith-based behavioral and mental health services provider that offers treatment and psychiatric services for all ages as well as consultations for businesses and organizations. Kopper's dad was Philip Bedsworth, who with Sara's mother, Joyce, told the story of his illness and its effect upon the family in the book *Fight the Good Fight* (Herald Press, 1991).*





Mark J.H. Klassen

Restricted

Keeping global workers safe in the Internet age

In 2009, while serving with MB Mission in New Delhi, India, I received a text message from a friend down the street that simply read, "I found your prayers on the net." I was stumped. What did he mean? My friend, a Hindu, knew that I was a follower of Jesus and that I prayed. But what prayers had he found online?

Our family arrived in India in 2005. Because of the cultural and political climate there, I entered the country on a business visa. In conjunction with our ministry, I was a sourcing agent for a Canadian carpet company. In our neighborhood, I was not known as a "missionary" and even though our friends knew of our association with the church, and specifically with Mennonite Brethren, I did not often speak openly about my role with MB Mission.

When I replied to my friend's text message, he invited me to his house. On his laptop, he showed me how a simple Google search of his name had brought up the Daily Prayer Guide on the MB Mission website. There it was – his name, his wife's name and a sincere request to pray for them and for us to get along as our two families went on a vacation. I didn't know what to say to my friend. I had no idea that that information had been posted online. Fortunately, my friend was not offended. On the contrary, he thought it was neat that people were praying for him. Whew!

Sometimes missionaries aren't branded as such. In certain places, a more subtle approach is needed. In other places, where the gospel is not welcomed at all, even greater care is required. Missionaries and their organizations are learning to take precautions to keep workers safe from harm or deportation, and it is absolutely critical that churches and individuals who support missionaries adopt these precautions as well.

Here are seven things to remember when communicating about and with missionaries who are serving in restricted areas:

1. Google searches everything! Posting information online makes it available to everyone around the world. All files and attachments can be searched, including church bulletins and annual reports.

2. Communication is rarely private. Phone lines can be tapped. Mail can be opened. Even "secure" email can be cracked. Encryption technology is improving, but so are the hackers.

3. Church buildings are open to the public. Anyone can walk into your church foyer and read the bulletin board, including representatives from foreign governments. It happens.

4. Choose your words carefully. Avoid trigger words like "missionary," "church" and "conversion." Let the worker be your guide. Also, avoid political words that can be sensitive.

5. First names are safer than full names. First names are more generic and very difficult to search.

6. It may not be illegal to be a Christian in restricted areas, but it is sometimes illegal to proselytize, so be careful how you communicate about evangelism and outreach activities.

7. Protect national believers and partners. Be discreet as you refer to other missionaries, local believers and partner organizations.

The Internet is a part of the new reality in global mission that we all face together. As we take these precautions seriously, we also want to remember that God is bigger than any challenge we face. Let's pray for wisdom and use discretion, but let's also be strong and courageous in the task of bringing the gospel to the least reached.

Mark J.H. Klassen lives in Yarrow, BC and serves as the creative director for MB Mission's Media Team. Mark and his wife, Amy, and their three daughters returned to Canada in 2011 after serving for six years in New Delhi, India.

Returning Veterans, Returning Hope: Seeking Peace Together is a newly released six-week curriculum designed to assist congregations in thinking theologically and practically about war's trauma, healing from trauma and Jesus' way of peace.

The curriculum, which is appropriate for churches with and without veterans, is available in online format only. It can be accessed at pjsn.org and mcc.org/veterans-curriculum. The curriculum is written by Jason Boone, coordinating minister of the Peace and Justice Support Network; Titus Peachey, peace education coordinator at Mennonite Central Committee U.S.; and Iraq War veteran Evan Knappenberger, a student at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.

re: Veterans

milestones

BAPTISM/MEMBERSHIP

Diane Creekmore, Kimberly Nyquist and Steve Nyquist were received as members of **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, Nov. 30. Betty Barr, James German, Tonya German and Billy Tiger were received as members Oct. 12.

Darren and Traci Decker, Wanda Kennedy and Carolyn Regier were received Nov. 16 as members of **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church**.

Rachelle Schrock, Dakota Schrock, Alli Lee and Melissa Estrada were baptized Nov. 2 at **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**

Woody Olmstead, David Silk and Caroline Jones were baptized Oct. 26 and received as members of **Enid (Okla.) MB Church**. Jill Olmstead and Jay and Kyla Ford were also received as members.

John Frausto was baptized Nov. 2 and received as a member of **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church**. Mary Brandt, Terry and Marilyn Chappell, Roger and Ina Heinrichs, Ryan and Kathy Manning and Brian and Alex Smith were also received as members in November.

John Prieb was baptized Nov. 9 at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**

Andrew Krause, Lydia Mayer and Elsie Mayer were baptized Sept. 28 and received as members of **Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

Brandie Whitenec was baptized and received as a member of **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** Oct. 5.

Robert Bender was baptized Aug. 31 and received as a member of **Butler MB Church, Fresno, Calif.** Lauren Webb was baptized and received as a member Oct. 19. Myrna Kliewer was received as a member Oct. 20.

Vanette Buller and Emily Jost were baptized Oct. 26 at **Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla.** Derrick Austin, Brian Canada, Cara Canada, Parker Canada, Alyssa Friesen, Emily Jost, Virginia Meade and Chloe Winton were received as members.

CELEBRATIONS

The Life Center, Lenoir, NC, marked their 82nd anniversary with a "Homecoming Celebration" Oct. 19. The church was established in 1932 as Bushill Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church, later became Bushtown MB Church and changed to The Life Center in 2010. The celebration included an introduction of longtime members, a slideshow of the church's history and special guests. Former pastor Fred Howell preached.

WORKERS

Jim Kennemur has been called as associate

pastor at **Madera Avenue Bible Church, Madera, Calif.**

The Heart Church, Tulsa, Okla., has hired Carlie Sturgeon as children's ministry leader, beginning Jan. 1.

Marcus Vidal is the new youth pastor at **Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.** He began Sept. 1.

Paul Triplett has accepted the call to serve as associate pastor at **Birch Bay Bible Community Church, Blaine, Wash.**, beginning Jan. 4.

Jeremy Matlock has accepted a call as the new pastor of adult discipleship and assimilation at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church**.

DEATHS

Akina, George, Fresno, Calif., member of North Fresno (Calif.) MB Church, Feb. 4, 1951—Oct. 10, 2014. Spouse: Jenny Akina. Children: Kimiko Wright, David, Ben, Emily Barcelos; two grandchildren.

Fast, Eugene Roy, Fairview, Okla., member of Fairview MB Church, July 7, 1924—Oct. 17, 2014. Parents: David and Sarah Fast. Spouses: LaVerne Nickel, deceased; Freda Koop Wichert, deceased. Children: Judy Walton, Karen Burlison, Ronald, Jim; 11 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren.

Feil, Janice Ann, Shafter, Calif., member of Shafter MB Church, Nov. 22, 1934—Oct. 23, 2014. Parents: Ike and Edna Schaffer. Spouse: Arly Feil. Children: Rhonda Haworth, Rod, Ryan; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Funk, Salome Nord, Bakersfield, Calif., of Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Oct. 6, 1926—Oct. 21, 2014. Parents: J.P. and Tina Nord. Spouse: Arnold Funk. Children: Robert, Charlotte Kaukani; six grandchildren.

Hambleton, Mel, Fresno, Calif., member of North Fresno (Calif.) MB Church, March 24, 1928—Sept. 7, 2014. Spouse: Bill Hambleton. Children: Peggy Moore, Janice Rucker; four grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

Hanke, Neva, Fresno, Calif., member of Bethany MB Church, Fresno, Sept. 24, 1923—Oct. 3, 2014. Spouse: Melvin, deceased. Children: Steven, Roger.

Janzen, Milton Eugene, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, March 17, 1929—Oct. 1, 2014. Parents: Frank and Bertha Janzen. Spouses: Barbara Knaak; Sally, deceased. Children: Connie Wiebe, Laura Lasnik, Patti; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Kroeker, Elmer Jacob, Corn, Okla., of Corn MB Church, April 10, 1921—Oct. 8, 2014. Parents: Jacob and Mary (Zielke) Kroeker. Spouse: Luella Kliewer, deceased. Children: Wallace, Charlene Epp; five grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

Trunk or Treat helps churches connect with community

Trunk or Treat events were again popular among USMB congregations this fall. Held on or near Halloween, the events are typically held in the church parking lot and feature decorated car trunks, often with fun themes such as Bible characters, movies, seasonal themes or book or TV characters. Children then go from car to car to collect candy and treats. Tim Thiessen, pastor at Birch Bay Bible Community Church, Blaine, Wash., calls it "Halloween tailgating." Thiessen says one purpose of Trunk or Treat is simply for their church family to have fun together, but it also provides a way to interact with community members.

"Without that ability to interact, we would struggle to do it again the next year," he says. Vinewood Community Church, Lodi, Calif., encourages ongoing connection by including information about the church in the treat bags, offering free food, raffling off a bicycle and collecting information from those who attend in order to follow up. A prayer team covers the event in prayer. Trunk or Treat events often draw a good crowd; North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., has been hosting Trunk or Treat for the past eight years, and estimates that 1,100 parents and kids attended their 2014 event.

Fire damages Montana church

An early morning fire Nov. 18 significantly damaged the building of Gospel Fellowship Church, Wolf Point, Mont. The morning fire burned through the interior of the 80-foot-sanctuary addition, damaging 48 feet of the rafters. There was also significant smoke and water damage throughout the entire structure. After the fire, the congregation was invited to meet temporarily with Community Bible Church, another Wolf Point congregation that belongs to the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches (formerly Conference of Evangelical Mennonites). Pastor Bruce Bogar asks for prayer that the Lord will be honored and that the congregation will be unified and will continue to be a blessing in their community.

NCDC holds district festival

The annual harvest festival of the North Carolina District Conference (NCDC) was held Oct. 18 at Beechbottom MB Church, Newland, NC. The Sunday morning event featured praise and worship led by Eddie Johnson, pastor of Beech Bottom, and a challenge by Eric Hinton, a deacon at Laytown MB Church, Lenoir, NC. The service was followed by a meal. This is one of many annual gatherings intended to encourage unity among the district's churches and to support one of the smaller churches. NCDC consists of seven churches and some 260 total members.

Nord, Noel "Juanita," Shafter, Calif., of Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., Sept. 2, 1920—Sept. 24, 2014. Parents: Burnis and Freda Myers. Spouse: Frank Nord, deceased. Children: Becky Groves, Morris, Tim, Cheryl Toews; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren.

Penner-Vogt, Bessie, Wichita, Kan., member of Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., June 25, 1922—Nov. 15, 2014. Parents: David and Martha (Litke) Leppke. Spouses: Leo Penner, deceased; Henry Vogt, deceased. Children: Dianne Lygrisse, Ron Penner; four grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren. stepchildren: Brian Vogt, Ken Vogt, Beth Frantz.

Thesman, Leora Bernice, Enid, Okla., member of Enid MB Church, Nov. 3, 1926—Sept. 29, 2014. Parents: George and Mary (Warkentin) Rempel. Spouse: Jake Thesman, deceased. Children: Bob, Jodi Gossen, Debbie Wright; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Tolle, Roland B., Buhler, Kan., member of Buhler MB Church, Feb. 24, 1936—Oct. 16, 2014. Parents: George and Delia (Anderson) Tolle. Spouse: Ardyth Wieck. Children: Randy, Ricci Spencer, Rodney; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

reaching in DISCIPLESHIP

During December attendees of **North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan.**, shared Christmas celebration ideas with one another by writing Advent ideas, traditions and stories on ornaments and hanging them on a tree.

Children from **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, are invited to the church before school on Mondays to eat muffins and work on memory verses.

Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., has launched a new "Spiritual Care" ministry, in which trained people from the congregation are available to talk to anyone in the community about topics such as relationships, abuse, spiritual questions or grief. The free ministry does not provide professional therapy but one-on-one conversation on life's challenging issues.

Prior to Thanksgiving, attendees of **North Park Community Church, Eugene, Ore.**, were encouraged to post things they were thankful for on a bulletin board in the church library. The goal was 10,000 reasons to be thankful.

Fairview (Okla.) MB Church hosted a "Love and Respect" video marriage conference Nov. 14-15.

FELLOWSHIP

Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla., of-

fered a Christmas card tree during the holidays so that attendees could give one card to the entire congregation rather than mailing individual cards. The church's outreach committee encouraged attendees to donate the money saved on cards and postage to a project of Mennonite Central Committee and the Colombian MB Church. A Nov. 15 women's event featured workshops on cooking a turkey, making a decorative wreath, preparing the heart during Advent and simplifying and prioritizing to reduce holiday stress.

Attendees of **Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb.**, went Christmas caroling and ate pie Dec. 4.

A Christmas festival Dec. 13 at **Shadow Mountain Church, West Jordan, Utah**, included bounce houses, popcorn, drinks, cotton candy, hot dogs, carnival games and candy.

Women brought desserts and gifts that represented their favorite things to a holiday event Dec. 6 at the St. George Campus of **South Mountain Community Church, St. George, Utah**.

Attendees of **Trinity Church, Portland, Ore.**, participated in a dessert contest in connection with their Christmas banquet Dec. 3. Prizes were awarded for the biggest, best tasting and most creative entries.

Elders from **The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, hosted a Christmas dinner for seniors Dec. 16.

A women's event Dec. 2 at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church** titled "I Dream in Chocolate" featured chocolate fondue and a Christmas presentation.

Women from **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church** heard guest presenters talk about family holiday traditions at a Nov. 18 "Hark the Holidays" event. A holiday boutique followed the program.

Young adults from **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, hosted their second annual chili cook-off Nov. 1.

Youth from **Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, SD**, hosted a Christmas dinner theater Dec. 7 to raise funds to attend Named 2015, the National Youth Conference, to be held in April in Denver, Colo.

Families from **Birch Bay Bible Community Church, Blaine, Wash.**, gathered for a potluck and pumpkin carving Oct. 26.

North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., hosted a "Pink Impact" women's conference Nov. 14-15. Women from the state of Kansas were invited to this video event that featured well-known speakers Tony Evans, Blynda Lane, Anne Bieler, Charlotte Gambill and Lisa Bevere.

Attendees of **Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz.**, played volleyball in costumes Oct. 26.

Attendees of **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** took a hayride and held a wiener roast Nov. 2.

Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan., hosted a simulcast "Women of Faith" event for women Nov. 7-8.

WORSHIP

West End MB Church, Lenoir, NC, honored pastor James Wilfong Oct. 26 as part of pastor appreciation month. Several groups in the congregation sang and many gave him gifts.

Oct. 4-5 was a mission focus weekend at **Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.** Otto Ekk and Vic Wiens, both with MB Mission, were guest speakers.

reaching out

LOCALLY

This year's "Bethlehem Experience" at **Kingsburg (Calif.) MB Church** included a Spanish-language

performance led by volunteers from Iglesia Agua Viva, the Spanish-language congregation that shares facilities with Kingsburg MB.

Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, SD, offered free family portraits to anyone in their community Dec. 13. Door hangers helped spread the word. Children also had the opportunity to frost sugar cookies during the day.

Instead of holding a Sunday morning worship service Nov. 30, attendees of **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church** tackled 16 projects within the community.

The Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., congregation donated 101 Thanksgiving food baskets to needy families in their community.

Women from **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church** sponsored a grocery shower in November for students of Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, the denominational seminary in Fresno, Calif.

Oct. 12 was "Faith in Action Sunday" at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church**. Participants chose from a num-

ber of service opportunities with local ministries.

An offering during vacation Bible school at **New Hopedale Mennonite Church, Meno, Okla.**, provided a total of 1,951 meals for needy children through the Children's Hunger Fund.

Volunteers from **The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, joined with volunteers from 17 other churches to prepare Thanksgiving dinner for 40,000-50,000 people in an effort called "Love for Thanksgiving." The Bridge was responsible for purchasing, preparing and cooking some 1,800 turkeys Nov. 25.

Families from **Butler MB Church, Fresno, Calif.**, used Halloween as an opportunity to meet neighbors by hosting "Meet and Treat" events in their homes.

Bethany MB Church, Fresno, Calif., offered a "Bethlehem Drive-Through" nativity with music and narration nightly Dec. 18-20. Smores and hot cocoa were available at the journey's end.

CLEARINGHOUSE

LOCAL CHURCH JOB OPENINGS

Associate Pastor: Memorial Road MB Church, Edmond, Okla., is seeking a full-time associate pastor to bring leadership to the area of worship. This visionary leader will help us to experience meaningful and impactful worship of our great and worthy God on Sunday mornings while also leading us to become worshipers in every area of life. They will partner with the senior pastor to help bring intentional focus to worship times and to help the church reach the lost and disciple the rescued. Please submit resumes to the search committee at: mrrmbcsearch@gmail.com See www.mrrmbc.org for more information.

Associate Pastor: North Fresno MB Church in Fresno, Calif., is seeking a passionate and gifted individual for the role of associate pastor of children and family ministries. This is a full-time position with benefits. Visit www.northfresnochurch.org for details including a full job posting and job description. Resumes can be sent to Aaron Wiens, search team chair, at docwiens@gmail.com.

Campus Pastor: New Life Church of Ulysses, Kan., is seeking a campus pastor. This would be ideal for an individual who would be seeking a part time ministry position in a unique ministry model. Contact Ted Goertzen at tedgoer@pld.com or 620-353-7245

Youth Pastor: Vinewood Church, Lodi, Calif., is prayerfully seeking a full time youth pastor. Vinewood students are eager to be "fed, led and relate to." An ideal candidate would also have worship

leading skills. Interested persons may send inquiries or resumes to: vinewoodyouthsearch@gmail.com.

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

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

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.

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 OPENING

Biology: Fresno Pacific University invites applications for a biology faculty position in its programs serving traditional undergraduate students. Complete job description, requirements and application are available at www.fresno.edu/careers.

English: The Fresno Pacific University Department of English is looking for applicants with skills and interests consistent with undergraduate instruction at a regional university with the core of its programs in the liberal arts. The professor will teach British and/or World Literature but should have the ability to teach a broad range of courses. Complete job description at www.fresno.edu/careers.

Mathematics: Fresno Pacific University is seeking a qualified faculty member in mathematics to teach upper- and lower-level mathematics courses, mentor and advise mathematics students as well as general education students and participate in scholarship, departmental and university activities. Complete job description and required qualifications at www.fresno.education/careers.

TRAVEL

Visit Europe the Mennonite way! Multiple hotel tours focusing on Mennonite-Anabaptist history in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. Organized by Mennonite Heritage Tours, www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu (2/6)

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Visalia	\$300,000	10 Years	\$591
Bakersfield	\$375,000	15 Years	\$714
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119
 RESPONSES
 —
OVER
200
 CHARITIES

At the 2014 USMB National Convention, we conducted a survey in which we asked people to name the top 5 charities they love to give to! We had 119 responses and over 200 charities, or types of charities were mentioned. Our church family loves to give and loves to give to their local church first and foremost! However, we also love many other ministries. The graphic above illustrates the top charities listed in the survey with greater emphasis given to those with a higher ranking.

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