

C H R I S T I A N L E A D E R

July / August 2018

Is the Bible worth reading? Page 9

National MB youth conventions shape faith Page 17

Revive us again Page 31

The B-I-B-L-E



IT'S NOT TOO LATE
TO REGISTER!

Celebrating

OUR DIVERSITY & UNITY

USMB

National Convention & Pastors' Conference

July 24-28, 2018

University of Utah, Salt Lake City



*Don't miss the
Salt Lake City and
SMCC Ministry tour
sponsored by
MB Foundation!*

www.usmb.org/2018-national-convention

USMB
Increasing Impact Together



#USMB2018

in this issue

July / August 2018

FEATURES

9 Is the Bible worth reading?

BRENT WARKENTIN AND
MATT EHRESMAN

*Why we can trust and
understand the Bible*

12 Reading the Bible like Paul

DEL GRAY

*New Testament writers ask:
How does the Old Testament
point us to Jesus?*

14 Bible Reading 101

RICK BARTLETT, MELANIE HOWARD,
WENDELL LOEWEN AND BRIAN ROSS

*Suggestions for meaningful
Bible study*

■ Read additional feature articles
at www.christianleadermag.com

DEPARTMENTS

5 The news

7 5 minutes with...

17 Body life

■ *National MB youth conventions
shape faith*

■ *Local church is "For Visalia"*

■ *Laurelglen members minister to
refugees*

■ *Convention will celebrate diversity,
missional unity*

■ *Douglas to serve USMB as C2C
church planting mobilizer*

27 Church news

COLUMNS

4 Editorial

CONNIE FABER

8 Testimony

BRAD NEWBURG

25 Mission & ministry

26 Vantage point

JON WIEBE

31 From the national director

DON MORRIS

Standing on the Word of God

The Bible can't guide us if it sits on the shelf

Americans feel good about the Bible. According to a 2017 LifeWay Research survey, more than half consider the Bible to be a good source for morals (52 percent), and about a third say the Bible is helpful (37 percent), true (36 percent) and life-changing (35 percent). Even more (81 percent) told the American Bible Society (ABS) and Barna Group that they believe the Bible is the actual or inspired word of God.

This ABS/Barna study also reveals that overall only about a third of Americans have read through all or almost all of the Bible, while 23 percent haven't read more than a few sentences. When it comes to Americans who regularly attend church, a 2012 LifeWay Research survey reveals that less than half read the Bible more than once a week and one in five say that they never read it.

These statistics are reflected in a comment by Brian Ross, faculty member at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, in the question and answer article, Bible Reading 101, about studying the Bible that is included in this issue (pages 14-16). "So few people give attention to serious biblical study, I am more than thrilled if anyone simply spends time reading any translation of the Bible," Ross says in response to a question about Bible translations.

For Mennonite Brethren, the Bible has historically been our primary authority for matters of faith and life. "As a biblical people, we commit to resolving questions about God and how we are to live by asking, 'What does the Bible say?' and 'How do we apply Scripture so that it guides how we live in today's world?'" is how the U.S. Board of Faith and Life pamphlet, "What We Believe," describes this commitment to the Word of God.

I am pleased to be part of a family of faith that strives to make decisions about everyday life on the basis of what the Bible says. But if Mennonite Brethren follow the trend of American Christians, many of us are not regularly or thoroughly reading the Bible and that will make it difficult for us to be guided by God's Word as individuals and congregations. Our challenge is simple: We need to read our Bibles. My hope is that the articles in this issue will encourage you to do just that. ▀



Connie Faber

has served as editor of Christian Leader since 2004. She and her husband, David, are members of Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan.

Connie Faber
EDITOR

Janae Rempel
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Shelley Plett
GRAPHIC DESIGNER

The *Christian Leader* (ISSN 0009-5149) is a gathering place for the people, passions and mission of U.S. Mennonite Brethren. The *Christian Leader* is published bimonthly by the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. However, the opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the church as a whole.

COPYRIGHT: The articles printed in the *Christian Leader* are owned by the CL or by the author and may not be reprinted without permission. Unless noted, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

READER PARTICIPATION: Letters to the editor should be 300 words or less and on one subject. Letters must be signed and include the writer's city and state. Letters will be edited for clarity, appropriateness and length. Letters will be published, as space allows, unless marked, "Not for publication."

Freelance article submissions are welcome; a SASE must accompany articles.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$10 for six issues and \$20 for 12 issues (\$15, \$30 in Canada; all other countries \$25 for six issues); \$1.50 per copy

CORRESPONDENCE: All correspondence, including subscription questions and address updates, should be addressed to

Christian Leader
Box 155, 107 N. Main
Hillsboro, KS 67063-0155
Phone: 620.947.5543
Email: editor@usmb.org

MEMBERSHIP: The *Christian Leader* is a member of the Evangelical Press Association and Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Christian Leader*, Box 155, Hillsboro, KS 67063. Periodicals postage paid at Hillsboro, Kansas.

Christian Leader is published by



U.S. Conference of
Mennonite Brethren Churches

USMB Leadership Board has “very good” conversations

When the USMB Leadership Board met April 6-7, 2018, in Denver, Colo., the agenda focused on conversation more than decision-making. The conversations, characterized as “very good” by Leadership Board chair Marv Schellenberg, covered theological issues, church planting and ongoing changes in USMB vision and strategy.

The Leadership Board had a lengthy discussion regarding women in ministry and the atonement during the U.S. Board of Faith and Life (BFL) report. “I appreciate BFL’s work as they handle the hard stuff,” says Schellenberg. “They have the spiritual gift of understanding, and we have affirmed their request that we be patient as they work through these issues and give due diligence to guarding the Confession of Faith.”

The board discussed new developments in USMB church planting, now being done in cooperation with MB Mission and C2C USA. Don Morris, USMB national director, shared plans being developed by MB Mission to establish a new mission agency, to be called Multiply, as an outgrowth of the merger of MB Mission and C2C Network. Board members noted areas of concern and affirmation.



Tim Sullivan (far left), David Hardt, Marv Schellenberg and Don Morris at the April leadership board meeting that focused on discussions on a variety of topics. *Photo credit: USMB*

Structural changes being considered by the Canadian Conference of MB Churches (CCMBC) was also a point of extended discussion that ultimately led the board to affirm changes initiated two years ago to the USMB vision and strategy. Morris reported on a number of shifts being considered by CCMBC at the national level to prioritize the provincial conferences, including budget reductions, shifting the executive director’s position from full-time to part time and the discontinuation of biennial national conventions.

The Leadership Board took action on four items. They appointed the chair of USMB Youth—previously the National Youth Commission—and the president of Multiply as nonvoting board participants. The board approved a Memorandum of Understanding between USMB, CCMBC and the Historical Commission that provides the commission with an annual grant from each of the national conferences. The Leadership Board instructed the U.S. BFL to write a letter to Mennonite Central Committee encouraging the agency to “uphold the sanctity of marriage as written in all of the Anabaptist confessions of faith,” according to the minutes. The board also approved the slate of nominees to be presented to delegates at the 2018 National Convention to be held July 26-28.—*CL*

MB Mission board affirms strategic plan

God has been faithful to lead us in our journey to greater unity and effectiveness in One Mission—local, national and global. At the March meetings, the MB Mission Board of Directors affirmed a strategic plan to merge MB Mission and C2C Network into one new entity called Multiply.

During the next several months, we will be actively engaged in a process of discernment and change as we work toward being fully launched into our new identity by January 2019. In the weeks to come, at key events like Canadian Conference of MB Church’s Gathering and the USMB National Convention, we will be sharing more about this unfolding mission story and this new wineskin. Join us as we pray for spiritual renewal and mission to transform the church and our nations in our day.

For future updates and more information about this new direction, go to multiply.net.—*MB Mission*

USMB encourages MCC to hold traditional view of marriage

USMB leaders have sent a letter to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) encouraging the inter-Mennonite relief, development and peace organization to hold all who serve with the agency to the traditional view of marriage as between one man and one woman.

The letter was prompted by a recent decision by MCC to continue to allow for exceptions to the human resources framework, including the stated lifestyle expectation that all MCC staff and volunteers will “respect and abide by an understanding of sexual intimacy as only within marriage between one man and one woman, reflecting the confessions of faith of [MCC’s] supporting denominations,” as explained in a letter to denominational

leaders written by J. Ron Byler, MCC U.S. executive director.

The USMB letter, emailed to Byler April 23, 2018, says, “We strongly encourage MCC to continue to hold to those standards for all positions in the U.S. We are very disappointed to learn that MCC has made provision for possible exceptions to this standard.... We fervently ask that MCC remain firm concerning previously stated positions about marriage and sexuality—for all who serve MCC in any capacity.”

Don Morris, USMB national director, Tim Sullivan, U.S. Board of Faith and Life chair, and Marv Schellenberg, USMB Leadership Board chair, signed the letter.—CL

Plett commissioned as ICOMB executive director



The International Community of Mennonite Brethren (ICOMB) commissioned Rudi Plett of Asuncion, Paraguay, as the new executive director when representatives from 18 of the 21 member national conferences met June 2-6, 2018, in Vienna, Austria. The 42 summit participants were hosted by Mennonitischer Freikirche Oesterreich (Mennonite Free Church of Austria), which is comprised of five churches.

Plett, who officially began his new responsibilities July 1, and will work from Asuncion, replaces David Wiebe of Canada, who served as the ICOMB executive director for eight years. Plett

previously served ICOMB as associate director for Latin America and as regional team leader for MB Mission from January 2017 until the present. Plett is well known to ICOMB leaders as former representative of the Vereinigung der Mennoniten Brüdergemeinden Paraguay (German MB Conference) and as ICOMB chair from 2012 to 2016.

The ICOMB representatives discussed and accepted the Emerging Conference Pathway, a two-year process by which a national conference or network of churches can become an ICOMB member, and the Education and Equipping Matrix, an outline for training pastors through nonformal means.

In other business, Plett announced plans for a regional consultation July 26-28 in Paraguay for Latin American conference leaders, and Paul Duck, of Brazil, presented a workshop on the Holy Spirit. The representatives accepted a budget of \$180,000 for 2019 and elected Emerson Cardoso of Brazil as the chair and Andreas Isaak of Germany as secretary. The summit concluded with a foot washing and communion, a service that is always a highlight of the annual gathering.—CL

USMB Confession of Faith translated to Russian

In a five-month effort that spanned three countries, the USMB Confession of Faith (COF) has been translated into Russian.

“There are 31 Slavic churches in our USMB family, many of which still speak in their language in worship services,” says USMB national director Don Morris. “It seems very appropriate to provide our Confession of Faith in the Russian language for the benefit of these many brothers and sisters. We worked at this to make sure that our Confession of Faith was translated correctly. We didn’t want just a ‘Google translation’ but one that truly reflects the content of our confession of faith.”

The U.S. Board of Faith and Life (BFL) spearheaded the project that began in 2015. Finding someone to do the translation work was challenging and in January 2018, USMB hired a woman in Romania to translate the document. Translators in the Ukraine reviewed and revised the translation. The revised translation was then sent to Alex Kaprian, pastor of Pilgrim Church in Spokane, Wash., and Aleks Borisov, a pastor and former USMB staff member, for review and revisions. Read the Russian translation online at <https://usmb.org/confession-of-faith-russian/>.—CL

FPU, Tabor hold spring commencements

Tabor College and Fresno Pacific University, the Mennonite Brethren colleges in Hillsboro, Kan., and Fresno, Calif., held commencements in May.

Tabor College held its commencement May 19 with more than 2,000 people in attendance at Joel H. Wiens Stadium and via live stream online. Of the 190 graduates, 119 earned degrees at the Hillsboro campus and 71 earned degrees online through the Wichita campus.

Paul Folmsbee, a 1982 Tabor graduate who is the U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Mali, addressed the graduates on “Being Resilient.” Class speakers were Molly Wiebe Faber and Shelly Westfall.

Wiebe Faber and Philip Ediger received Fran Jabara Leadership Awards. At a Friday reception, Jordan Horstick and Sierra Sanchez received the Larry and Elaine Nikkel Service Award.

Fresno Pacific University held its spring commencement May 5. Eligible participants included 646 students: 244 from bachelor’s degree completion programs, 215 from traditional undergraduate programs and 187 from master’s degree programs, including 19 from Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary.

Ashley Swearengin, former Fresno mayor and currently president and CEO of Central Valley Community Foundation, spoke to more than 7,000

5 minutes with...

people at Seland Arena in downtown Fresno on the university's theme verse, Matt. 19:26.

Hailey Millhollen and Christa DenHartog shared the prize for highest grade point average, with scores of 4.0. Millhollen also won the Harold H. Haak Academic Achievement Award. Elizabeth Lake, associate professor of psychology, received the Nickel Excellence in Teaching Award (NETA). The Seminary Service Award went to Central Valley Justice Coalition, a Fresno nonprofit fighting human trafficking in the region.—TC, FPU

DaSilva affirmed as Canadian MB national director



Elton DaSilva has been unanimously affirmed by the Executive Board of the Canadian Conference of MB Churches (CCMBC) as the conference's national director. He will be commissioned at Gathering 2018, July 11–14, in Saskatoon.

DaSilva has served as executive director of the MB Church of Manitoba (MBCM) since December 2010, overseeing MBCM's growth from 40 congregations to 55. His training from postsecondary institutions in Alberta, Manitoba and Brazil spans business administration, economics and theology.

The change in title for CCMBC's leader from executive director to national director reflects the shift from CCMBC's independence to greater partnership with the provinces through the Collaborative Model, on which delegates will vote at Gathering 2018.—CCMBC



Joyce Creed

Academic Team coach Joyce Creed was as surprised as her five students when their Corn Bible Academy (CBA) team beat powerhouse Drummond High School for first place in Class A at this year's Oklahoma state academic tournament. Creed, a CBA Bible teacher and member of Bible MB Church in Cordell, just completed her 14th year as CBA's academic coach.

Why was it such a surprise to win?

In our second round, Drummond crushed us, which put us in the losers' bracket. But the kids kept smiling. Drummond had won the state championship 17 times in the last 20 years. When we actually worked our way back to the top of the bracket, we expected Drummond would beat us again, because, being double elimination, we would have to do the unthinkable and beat them twice in a row—which we did.

What was a key moment of the match?

In the 60-second round, the team picks a topic and answers 10 questions in a minute. When our kids picked "Probability with Marbles," I froze. This could be a disaster. Once they got the first two answers, my assistant, Mr. Thiessen, the math teacher, relaxed; they knew the formula. Math really pulled us over the top.

What does a winning team need to know?

Books and authors; art and artists. They should be familiar with con-

stitutional amendments, state and national capitals and the top 10 people in categories like architecture, philosophy, chemistry and music. Questions come from all academic subjects, but also topics like cooking, auto mechanics or sports. We prepare and prepare and prepare. I've taken some really good teams to state, but a good team doesn't guarantee a win. You just never know.

What makes a good team member?

You should be curious about everything not just one subject. And you have to be willing to take a risk, not be afraid to answer wrong. Most of this team has been together since seventh grade. They get along well and enjoy what they're doing.

What can Christians learn from the academic team community?

All Christians need to study for themselves, not just rely on the Internet for answers. Then have faith in what you've learned. If you think you're right, go ahead—take the chance to speak up.

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

Restoration

Christ quenched my thirst for acceptance

The sound of shattering glass pierced the Chicago night as my body made contact with the barbershop window. My brother and I had engaged four men in a fight outside a bar, and a fifth ambushed me, throwing me through the glass.

When I stood up, dazed, the first thing I saw was my brother, overcome by emotion. Looking down, I saw my shirt was covered in blood and glass shards were embedded in my arm. My ear was nearly sliced off.

We walked to a nearby hospital, where the next morning doctors told me what I had not realized the night before. Below my mangled ear, a piece of glass had lodged in my neck, centimeters from my jugular vein. It was a miracle I was alive.

At this stage in my life I was angry and desperately seeking my place in the world. Without faith, my seeking led me to try to find fulfillment and acceptance in alcohol, drugs and later, striving for corporate accolades.

Growing up, my family was active in church and I have fond memories of experiencing God as a child. But that began to change as I grew older and began to put social acceptance from peers above my faith and family. At 13, in an attempt to fit in, I started drinking alcohol, and by 15, I was experimenting with drugs. I hid it from my parents by getting straight A's.

Three circumstances contributed to a growing cynicism: my brother left for college, my best friend's father was fatally stabbed and my parents separated. I expressed anger by fighting. One night, after fighting at a party, I left hurriedly and was arrested. I spent 28 days in jail. When I got out, I remember thinking life was just a game of survival, and I had to learn how to play it better.

My parents knew I was in trouble and sent me to Chicago to live with my brother. What they didn't know was he was struggling with the same temptations I was. Moving allowed me to continue to abuse alcohol and drugs without interruption.

The fight that nearly killed me changed things. My brother and I agreed our lives had

to take a different path, so I decided to move to San Diego. There I became a bartender and paid my way through college. But an education and life in a bar was not what God intended me to find in San Diego.

I met my wife, Christy, there. Although she had no understanding of faith, God used her to show me how much he loved me. After we agreed to marry, I began working for a broadline food servicing company, where a different temptation surfaced with roots in the same old habits.

In my first year, I made more money than ever before. Seeking affirmation became my renewed addiction as I found my identity in capital, accolades and my national ranking on the sales board. I left my wife in the shadows as I sought corporate success. Financially we were secure, but we didn't have a relationship.

My world crumbled when I was issued a DUI after drinking at an awards banquet and attempting to drive home. I lost my license for two years and was laid off from my six-figure job.

For the first time since I was a teenager, I opened my Bible. I stopped drinking. Money was no longer a source of pride, as I worked as a restaurant manager at a national chain and made little more than minimum wage.

Christy and I started attending church, and she gave her life to Christ. When I returned to sales after two years, I promised I would be more intentional in being home.

But when I accepted a job in a new industry in Bakersfield, I worked extra-long hours to compensate for the knowledge I lacked. Christy told me she had had enough. For the first time I felt if I didn't make a change, she would leave me. I saw it in her eyes and heard it in the way her voice cracked when she spoke.

I cried for God to restore my marriage, promising to follow him the rest of my life. I began attending a men's group and went to a Christian retreat in Atlanta, Ga., where I



Brad Newburg co-leads an *Influencers Journey* group, where he encourages men to stay in close proximity with Jesus. He sends a daily devotional to more than 100 people, sharing what God's been teaching him. Brad and his wife, Christy, have two children, ages 7 and 5. The Newburgs have opened their home to couples in need in order to share Christ. The family attends The Bridge Bible Church in Bakersfield, Calif. While Brad considers his first job to chase after Christ, he also serves as vice president of Trinity Safety Company. This is his story, as told to Janae Rempel.

See **NEWBURG** on page 30

By Brent Warkentin
and Matt Ehresman

Is the Bible worth reading?

Why we can trust and understand the Bible

Reading the Bible can be (very) hard. Even for seasoned believers, certain sections of Scripture can seem to have little cultural relevance to our lives today. Other parts feel repetitive, and some verses are just flat out difficult to understand.

Virtually all believers would probably agree studying God's Word is "important," but actually doing it—especially on a daily basis—can be a frustrating and discouraging battle.

If you've ever felt this way or are currently facing some of these struggles, you are not alone. God's Word is life-giving, but it is also certainly a challenging book.

Our church family recently went through a teaching series where we took a deeper look at the Bible. Can we trust it? How do we know it's accurate? Is there other historical evidence to back it up? Is it possible to really understand it? Is this book really even worth reading?

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true, to rebuke us when we go wrong, to correct us when we are wrong, and to teach us what is right."

The short answer? Yes. It is trustworthy, and you can understand it. If you've never developed a habit of reading Scripture or are currently facing a reading slump, here is some info and tips that may be helpful to you.

You can trust the Bible

A good first step for all of us is to decide if we can even trust this thing in the first place. Jesus and other biblical writers make some pretty bold claims about the purpose of human existence. If we can prove the Bible's accuracy and reliability, that should provide significant motivation to learn as much as we can.

You may be surprised to know that there are no original copies of the Bible. We don't have the entire Old Testament behind bulletproof glass in a museum somewhere. It's impossible to take our text and compare it word-by-word with the original copies of the Greek or Hebrew texts to confirm its accuracy. The words we read today are copies of copies of copies, passed down verbally and copied by hand for generations and generations throughout human history.

If you've ever played the "telephone" game (where one person starts out with a message and whispers it to the next person, who whispers to the next person and so on), you know messages can get jumbled. It's true that the more times a story changes hands, the more likely it is to vary from the original intended message. With stories that are literally thousands of years old, many people point to this phenomenon to question the Bible's accuracy. It seems almost impossible that the text we read today could be exactly the same as the original divinely-inspired word of God.

The argument is reasonable, but it isn't necessarily a detractor from the accuracy of Scripture. The truth is we don't have original copies of any historical document. If you can't trust the legitimacy of the Bible, then you also can't trust any historical document. Does it take some faith to trust the Bible? Yes. But does it also take faith to trust Aristotle and Herodotus and even recent American history? Absolutely.

Here's the good news: The accuracy of the Bible is more trustworthy than most of the books you grew up reading in school. Here's why:

Short time span

If you have trouble trusting the words of Moses or

Luke, then you really can't trust the words of Plato or Caesar.

Plato's classic work, *The Republic*, was written in 380 B.C. Just like the Bible, we don't have any original copies of Plato's work. The earliest copy archaeologists and researchers have found is believed to be from A.D. 900—1,280 years after it was written. In comparison, most of the New Testament was written between A.D. 50 and A.D. 100. The earliest copies we have records of today are less than 100 years old. Less than 100 compared to 1,280 years! It seems logical that the earlier the copies are, the more we can trust them. If that's true, the Bible stacks up well against similar historical documents.

Number of manuscripts

Along with the relatively "short" time span between the copies, we also have a high number of manuscripts of the original texts. To date, researchers have discovered around 750 copies of the Old Testament and as many as 5,600 of the New Testament. Do you know how many copies of Plato's *Republic*, we have?

Two. As in one, two. Two, compared to 750.

When you have 750 copies of the same story, you are able to compare. Let's say there's a discrepancy between manuscripts, or maybe the scribe had horrible handwriting and you're not totally sure if there were 500 soldiers in an army or 50,000. When you can compare between hundreds or thousands of copies—compared to two—you're able to get a much clearer picture of what is most likely accurate. Again, compared to other ancient texts, the Bible is remarkably trustworthy.

Scribal process

In biblical times, people were hired as scribes to be "guardians of the text," and they took pretty extreme measures to make sure copies of the original text were as accurate as possible. As the scribes were making copies, they read the words out loud as they wrote. When you speak out loud, your mind is much less likely to wander and make mistakes.

Beyond that, the exact number of paragraphs, words and letters of the copies had to match the original text exactly. So, let's say you spent days handwriting the book of Isaiah. There are 66 chapters and 1,291 verses in that book. After reading the words out loud and copying each verse by hand, let's say you finish and somehow left

out three letters. Not even a full word. Somehow your transcript was three letters short of the original.

Guess what? You get to throw that sucker away and start over!

Not only that, but the very middle sentence, word and letter of each book had to match the original. Go ahead—take this article and find the very middle letter by counting each character by hand. Even better: Read it out loud as you make a copy and then find the middle letter.

Copying a 280-character tweet with this method would be enough to drive me insane, but this is how we got our copies of Scripture today.

The Bible is miraculously trustworthy. If you can't trust the Bible, you really can't trust anything you've ever read. It still requires faith to study Scripture, but it's a very reasonable faith.

You can do it

Even if you do believe in its accuracy, the Bible can still be a difficult book to read. It's long. Certain stories don't seem to make a lot of sense. Some of the theology is admittedly confusing. Remember this: Just because something is hard to understand doesn't mean it's not true. Algebra, chemistry and physics are all true, but that doesn't mean they're easy.

You may not have a lot of faith in yourself to understand these concepts and stories, but the biblical writers have words of encouragement for those who read their letters. Here's what Paul says in his letter to the Romans:

"I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another" (Rom. 15:14).

Or possibly even more encouraging:

"You have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth... The anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you" (1 John 2:20, 27).

God has anointed you. You are competent to learn and study on your own. It is true that God gives special teaching gifts to some leaders, and it is definitely wise to learn from others who study Scripture. But as you do that, remember that God will help you to understand his Word.

We live in a pretty incredible time where we have countless books, concordances, websites, DVDs and seminars. God has certainly given insight and teaching skills to many leaders in today's church that we would be wise to utilize.

However, remember the words from John and Paul above. You have what you need to do it on your own. You don't have to hold hands with Beth Moore or Francis Chan or RightNow Media. You have the knowledge you need to understand the Bible, and—even better—you have the Holy Spirit inside of you guiding your thoughts and your mind.

If you're in a slump, try a new version. If you're not much of a reader, find an audio version you can listen to in the car. Download the free YouVersion app on whatever mobile devices you use. Choose a reading plan that takes you through a specific book or topic, and then tell a friend who can help keep you accountable.

One of the key things people can do to understand the Bible better is to read a shorter passage (just a few verses), slowly, several times (even out loud) and actually pause, think and pray to God for some insight. Ask God, "What are you trying to teach me? Are you reminding me of something I already know? What are you telling me to do? Is there a promise in these verses to trust? Is there a command to follow? Is there a sin to avoid?"

The Bible is a challenging book, but next time you find yourself struggling, remember three things:

Out of all of human literature, you can trust the Bible.

When studying difficult passages, it can be helpful to learn from scholars and teachers. But, be confident that the Holy Spirit is in you, and he will help you understand his Word!

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17 NLT).

Brent Warkentin has served as lead pastor at First MB Church in Wichita, Kan., since August 2005. Matt Ehresman serves First MB Church as the media director and since June 2013 has been responsible for media, graphic design, communications, web, video and social media.

Reading the Bible

My Sunday school class recently studied the book of I Corinthians, and I was asked to lead a lesson on chapter 10. I was tempted to focus on Paul's main points about idolatry and the use of our freedoms that dominate the chapter, but instead my thoughts lingered on verses one through five.

Here Paul explains that the ancient Israelites are disobedient to God even though they are "baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (I Cor. 10:2-4). Despite having read these verses before, I struggled to plan a discussion of them, simply because Paul is reading the Old Testament story of the Exodus in such an unusual way. The Red Sea crossing is interpreted as a baptism of the Israelites, eating manna in the wilderness becomes a kind of communion and drinking water from the rock points to Jesus.

Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament in these verses is not how we typically teach Tabor College students to read the Bible. We follow standard principles of biblical interpretation. We try to discover what the text meant for the original readers or listeners, and then we think about applying this same meaning to us today. In this passage, Paul interprets Exodus in a way that challenges this method of interpretation.

The issue

Paul and other authors of the New Testament (NT) refer to Old Testament (OT) texts often, and many of these passages are straightforward. Careful readers of the Bible have long noted, however, that many more of these quotations are actually quite challenging. When surveying how the NT authors interpret and use the OT, it quickly becomes obvious that they do not always employ the same methods of reading the Bible that we use today.

In our schools and churches, we are diligent about exegeting passages through careful consideration of the text's meaning by studying elements like historical background, literary context, word studies in the original language and other historical-grammatical methodologies. When using these kinds of tools on the text of the Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14, for example, we rediscover a great deal about the significance of that passage, but "baptism into Moses" is not the usual result of our exegesis.

Paul is not the only NT author who reads OT Scripture in a way that extends its meaning beyond what the first author originally meant. In Matthew 2:13-15 the author tells the story of Joseph and Mary taking Jesus to Egypt to avoid persecution by Herod, quoting Hosea 11:1 when he says, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Hosea uses these words to look back to the story of the Exodus when God delivers his children by leading the Israelites out of Egypt. Matthew sees a connection between the Exodus story and Jesus' story, so he perceives a new layer of meaning in Hosea's words, applying the prophecy not just to the Exodus but also to God's ultimate deliverance through Jesus.

Explanation

The two examples above illustrate a common occurrence. We regularly find NT authors referring to OT texts in ways that go beyond today's normal methods of Bible study. A survey of OT quotations in the NT results in a surprising number of times that the OT text is given an additional understanding by writers like Paul and Matthew. In light of the fuller picture that God reveals in and through Jesus, they gained a new level of insight into these OT texts that was not available previously. Their worldviews are now dominated by Jesus, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they use typical Jewish methods of interpretation to draw out something that extended beyond the original historical references in the text.

However, the NT authors don't just cherry-pick proof texts from the OT and randomly give them new meanings to validate their belief in Jesus as Messiah. There is usually a strong



Q & A

Bible Reading 101: Suggestions for meaningful Bible study

CL: What Bible study approach or plan do you recommend?

Rick Bartlett: Whatever works! There are a lot of good plans and strategies to choose from, but what's important is that people do something to regularly engage in the Word. This advice from Youth Specialties founder Mike Yaconelli has stuck with me: "Something is better than nothing."

Wendell Loewen: When I prepare for a sermon I use an inductive Bible study approach that we teach at Tabor. It involves word studies, outlining the text and referring to commentaries. For my personal Bible study, I tend to follow the SOAP model. The acronym stands for Scripture, observation, application and prayer.

Melanie Howard: I have friends who swear by "read the Bible in a year" approaches, but I worry that such plans tend to encourage a view of this sacred text as an unhealthy snack that is wolfed down rather than as an exquisite meal in which every bite is savored until the very last morsel is enjoyed. Finding a single chapter or book of the Bible to explore again and again can provide a better long-term relationship with Scripture and can encourage a deep and meaningful understanding of God's Word.

Brian Ross: We can study and study the Bible and yet keep ourselves rather separate from the content that we are learning. Instead, I want studying Scripture to be an encounter with the Holy Spirit. Most mornings I read a fairly large section of the Bible, possibly a whole chapter and at least half of one. Then I prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to me, within the big picture, what this Scripture means for human life? Once I discern a particular theme or an image, I prayerfully mash it up with various aspects of my own life, looking for what surprises, disturbs or challenges my assumptions. When I do this, I not only feel like I am learning new things, but that I am having a real encounter with God through the biblical text.

CL: When studying the Bible, should I use more than one Bible translation? Why?

Rick Bartlett: I like to use two or more translations when I'm studying for a couple of reasons. First, when I use a translation that I read all the time, I find I skim the text rather than deeply read it. My memory kicks in, and I complete the familiar passage in my head rather than really reading what the text is

The Word of God is changing people and communities, and yet research indicates that the time followers of Jesus spend reading the Bible is decreasing. How can we do better with our own personal Bible study? To help answer this question and to encourage us to prioritize Bible reading, the Christian Leader asked several of our Bible scholars for their advice on studying the Bible.

saying. Using a different translation helps stop that from happening.

The second reason I use multiple translations is because each version has a certain set of parameters the translators had to work with and knowing this can provide different insights.

I learned this from my father-in-law, Elmer Martens, who served on a number of translation teams. One example he gave: When he was working on translating one version, the team was given a list of words at a fourth-grade level to use and everything had to fit into that list. This wasn't for a children's Bible but for one on the market that is popular today. He struggled at times to fit the thought and flow of the text into the vocabulary list. Every version has a similar story.

Brian Ross: Using more than one translation of the Bible for in-depth study can be quite helpful. Translation from Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek (or

any other language) into English is not an exact science. Every language has a bit of a culture, orientation or worldview that never quite perfectly fits within another language. Reading different Bible translations is a quick and easy way to get a sense of the possible different meanings of the original biblical language into contemporary English. However, so few people give attention to serious biblical study, I am more than thrilled if anyone simply spends time reading any translation of the Bible!

Wendell Loewen: If one doesn't have immediate access to Bible study reference tools, I think it's a good idea to use more than one translation. Translations are, in a sense, mini commentaries. Often different translations render particular words in a variety of ways. So, I've found it helpful to compare the variety of word choices to help give the text fuller meaning.

Melanie Howard: Reading the Bible in multiple translations can bring out some of the nuances that may be present in the original language that cannot be adequately conveyed in English. Many words in Hebrew or Greek have rich clouds of possibility for translation in English. A single word can have several different possibilities for English equivalents, and since most Bible translators will only choose one of these, we cannot always get the full picture of what a biblical author may be trying to say. Reading more than one translation can help to overcome this deficit.

CL: What translation(s) do you personally use for Bible study?

Rick Bartlett: I switch around quite a bit. Currently I use the New International Version (NIV), New Revised Standard Version and the New Living Translation. When I've done my study and interpretation of a text, I like to read The Message to see what this paraphrase has to say on the passage.

Brian Ross: When preparing a sermon, I often use the NIV because it is a very familiar, easy-to-read translation that many contemporary churches use for public worship. In my personal times of Bible reading, I also use The

Message or David Bentley Hart's recent translation of the New Testament.

Wendell Loewen: I use the New Living Translation a lot. It's a very readable alternative to some of the other more well-known translations. Elmer Martens, Rick's father-in-law, served on its translation committee.

Melanie Howard: I tend to use the New Revised Standard Version as my go-to translation. The NRSV seems faithful to the original language while not being overly wooden. As a woman, I also appreciate the NRSV's inclusive language approach.

CL: What apps or online resources have you found that can enhance Bible study?

Rick Bartlett: I like the Olive Tree Bible app for the iPhone. Unlike many other apps, the Bible is downloaded onto my phone. Because I travel internationally, I know I always have a Bible with me even if I don't have cell service. The app allows me to make notes, look up words in Greek or Hebrew and to use other reference materials.

Wendell Loewen: On my computer I use BibleGateway.com for its accessibility and all the translations it carries. On my phone or tablet I prefer the YouVersion app. I particularly enjoy the "compare" feature in which I can highlight a verse and then compare how that verse is rendered in various translations.

Melanie Howard: There are a number of websites to which I often direct my students. As a basic access to the Bible in several English translations and some non-English languages as well, BibleGateway.com provides a user-friendly interface to read large chunks of the Bible on a single web-



“God’s people are reminded numerous times in the Bible to remember what he has done. Journaling is a great way to keep a record of ways that God speaks, thoughts that come from reading and prayers for yourself or others.”

page. When I am looking to quickly compare several English translations of a particular verse, I find biblehub.com to be a helpful tool for pulling up several versions side-by-side. Although it takes a bit of practice to discover how best to use its many resources, blueletterbible.com also provides some helpful resources, especially in terms of gaining at least a cursory understanding of some terms in the original languages.

CL: What kinds of resources (study Bibles, commentaries, etc.) do you recommend for personal Bible study?

Rick Bartlett: Lately I've been loving the NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible. It's nice to use for personal study, and I've been amazed at how meaningful the text becomes when I understand what is going on at the time. I've said for years that context is critical when looking at the Bible: context for a specific verse, a book of the Bible or the wider cultural context at the time the passage was written. This study Bible provides all that in an easy to follow format.

Wendell Loewen: I recommend a good study Bible in your preferred translation. The book introductions and notes below the text are very helpful. Beyond that, I recommend the Believer's Church Bible Commentary Series, Interpretation Commentary Series and the NIV Application Commentary Series. Some of the commentaries found online for free tend to be somewhat dated.

Melanie Howard: A study Bible that keeps the biblical text itself central is always a good choice. *The Harper Collins Study Bible* and the *New Oxford Annotated Bible* are good options in that regard.

It is important to ask what you want to get out of a Bible study tool. Are you looking for something that can help provide historical context? Make connections with other biblical texts?

Offer suggestions for modern application of biblical texts? There are a myriad of Bible study resources available, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Your goals for studying the Bible should affect the kinds of questions you ask when choosing resources.

Brian Ross: After years and years of using (and purchasing!) academic resources for biblical study, I use very few anymore. However, two small commentaries that I have found invaluable are *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. These two volumes make a very handy and compact resource that illuminate specific words, phrases and concepts within the biblical text which had a specific meaning to people within the original cultures in which they were written. It is amazing how much insight is offered up in these two volumes.

CL: Any other advice or comment?

Rick Bartlett: I encourage journaling alongside prayer, reading and study. God's people are reminded numerous times in the Bible to remember what he has done. Journaling is a great way to keep a record of ways that God speaks, thoughts that come from reading and prayers for yourself or others. It's an essential part of my routine.

Melanie Howard: Studying the Bible is like playing the piano. It is open to anyone, but it also rewards hard work and effort. As a child, I could bang my fists on a piano keyboard and produce sound. In that sense, I was a "pianist." However, if I would have ever desired to play Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto Number 3," I would have had to devote hours of practice to the task—and even then, may not have succeeded. Studying the Bible is similar. Everyone can read and study the Bible. However, getting the most out of this rich and sacred

book takes a lifetime of delightful and rewarding work.

Brian Ross: Because human beings are made in the image of God and the church is the body of Christ, part of how I see and understand Jesus is how he shows up through other people. There are so many new things about who our Lord is and how he is working in the world, that I will only learn by listening to how people, who are very different from me, read and interpret the Bible. Bible study should never remain a solitary pursuit!

Read this article online for additional suggestions on selecting a Bible translation. The online article also includes additional comments on these questions that we did not include in the print version.

Rick Bartlett is director of theological education and assistant professor of ministry at Tabor College. He is a graduate of Fresno Pacific University, MB Biblical Seminary and George Fox Evangelical Seminary. He has been a senior pastor, youth pastor, camp director and dean of students and was the short-term missions coordinator for British Youth for Christ.

Wendell Loewen is professor of youth, church and culture at Tabor College and is the executive director of FaithFront. He is a graduate of Fresno Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a former youth pastor and was the Southern District Conference youth minister.

Melanie Howard is assistant professor of biblical and religious studies at Fresno Pacific University. She is a graduate of Messiah College, the University of Notre Dame and Princeton Theological Seminary. She says God called her to a ministry of teaching when she was 16 years old.

Brian Ross is assistant professor of pastoral ministries at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary. He is a graduate of Lancaster Bible College, Lancaster Bible College Graduate School and George Fox University.

National MB youth conventions shape faith

Three NYC alumni reflect on their experiences

YouthCon 2019 will be held April 3-7, 2019, in Glorieta, N.M., returning to the location of the first National Youth Convention in 1975. YouthCon, formerly NYC, is a once-every-four-years event for senior high students of USMB churches. YouthCon will include worship, biblical teaching, personal spiritual challenge and community. Registration opens in fall 2018. As we anticipate returning to the site of the first national youth gathering, the CL asked three people to share their NYC experiences.

Joanna Chapa: Following Jesus

She stood.

One of 1,420 youth attending the 2003 National Youth Convention in Estes



Park, Colo., Joanna Chapa stood in response to an invitation to choose a life of following Jesus.

“There was a session that we were invited to stand from our chairs if we were willing to live radical lives for Jesus and pick up our crosses to follow him, no matter what the cost,” she says. “I remember in that moment I knew I wanted to be about this. I didn’t really know what that meant, much less what was ahead and what he would invite me to.”

As Chapa testifies, following Jesus is about being faithful, one stepping stone at a time.

Chapa was a worship leader at Gracepoint Church in La Grulla, Texas, at the time. She says chills came over her as more than 1,000 people sang at Estes.

“I sat there most sessions and dreamt of the day that I could help lead worship and/or help plan a National Youth Convention,” she says. “Little did I know, that was actually the Spirit of God placing in me a prophetic calling or dream into what He was going to invite me into.”

Chapa and her church worship team were asked to lead a morning worship service (photo), and she closed the last session in prayer.

“I remember standing on that stage, looking out to everyone there and sensing within me that God was going to keep inviting me to more opportunities like this in which I would be humbled and in awe of what he does,” she says.

Chapa served on the planning team for the next three conventions, also joining the worship team at Anaheim in 2007, where she says she realized nothing is more satisfying and fulfilling than when God gives and fulfills dreams.

Chapa has continued to follow God’s call as a long-term missionary with MB Mission in Peru.

“I have been here for a little over two years now and have committed to being here for 10 years,” she says. “If those sentences had been told to me 10 years ago, I would’ve never believed it. But, God is a God who gives us stepping-stone by stepping-stone. Step by step. And the beauty of it is that he’s walked with me each step of the way.”

BJ Heizelman: Foundation building

BJ Heizelman of Buhler (Kan.) MB Church has a track record, and he’d like to keep the streak alive.

Heizelman has attended all 11 National Youth Conventions since 1975, which, he says, has kept him young. Joking aside, NYC not only provided the groundwork for Heizelman’s faith but has continued to grow and shape it.

“Each of these (conventions) is a foundation-builder, even as an adult,” he says. “They’re for the students, but there’s a lot of meat that comes into my life when I’m there as a sponsor as well.”

Heizelman attended his first NYC as a high school freshman from Sawyer (N.D.) MB Church in 1975. He went as a college freshman in 1979.

He attended the next nine as a sponsor—he and his wife, Denise, served as sponsors for 33 years, first with Olathe (Kan.) Community Bible Church and then Buhler MB.

Although the Heizelmans have retired as sponsors, BJ helps out as needed and hopes to attend YouthCon 2019, returning to the place where it all began.

Heizelman remembers the fellowship of the bus ride from Sawyer to Glorieta, the impact of guest speaker Josh McDowell and the worship. At the time, Heizelman had only recently made his faith his own.

As Heizelman has continued to attend, he’s seen the impact NYC can have on young lives.

“It’s definitely a faith foundation experience,” he says. “It really opens your eyes to what kind of path that God might be leading you on.”

And yes, he hopes to keep the streak alive.

“I think it’d be fun to go (to Glorieta), No. 1, to keep my track record going, and No. 2, it’d be interesting to go back there as an adult now and relive some of that stuff that happened in ‘75.”

Steve Schroeder: Expands horizons

Steve Schroeder attended three National Youth Conventions—as a high school student, youth pastor and director. Each provided opportunity for growth, including finding a place in the Mennonite Brethren family, aiding in youth group bonding and developing his leadership skills.

Schroeder attended NYC in Glorieta, N.M., as a high school senior in 1975.

“It opened my eyes to the bigness of our MB family,” he says. “You grow up in a little youth group in your church and there might be 20 or 100 in your group, but you get there and you go,

‘Wow, I’m a part of something bigger than me.’”

Eight years later, Schroeder was newly-married and serving as youth pastor at Neighborhood Church in Visalia, Calif. He attended the 1983 NYC in Estes Park, Colo., as a sponsor.

“As a youth pastor, I found this to be a wonderful way of rallying our youth group, even some of the fringe ones, to say, ‘Hey, come with us. It’s a big event. It only happens once when you’re in high school,’” Schroeder says. “We were cutting firewood and doing garage sales and raising lots of money. Having a common goal, I think, was very valuable for us as a local youth group.”

Four years later, Schroeder returned as director of the 1987 NYC in Glorieta, where he cultivated leadership skills.

“I think Jesus very gently but clearly used that opportunity to help me iden-

tify some leadership gifts, to learn to depend on him,” Schroeder says. “If I’m going to lead something, I have to do it not just in my strength, but with his help and his strength.”

Schroeder lists other benefits of NYC as hearing from well-known speakers, recognizing and embracing diversity and building relationships.

“You walk away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for what the issues are in some of the other districts and how they’re dealing with those, the challenges that they face,” he says. “I think that served me well as I continued to grow and get involved in district and national leadership.”

Schroeder served 34 years in pastoral ministry, including eight years as a youth pastor, then, following seminary, as a lead pastor and church planter.—

Janae Rempel ▀

The Intersection of Ministry, Leadership and Culture

HAPPENS HERE.

Earn your M.A. in Ministry, Leadership and Culture

- ▷ Fully online program
- ▷ Designed for full-time pastors
- ▷ Anabaptist-focused coursework

FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY
Biblical Seminary
fpu.edu/mlc

Local church is “For Visalia”

Building program morphs into service to community

The first thing a person sees when walking into Neighborhood Church in Visalia, Calif., is a giant wooden board inscribed with “For Visalia.”

These two words have changed the culture at Neighborhood, revolutionizing its models for preaching, worship, giving and discipleship, as the church lives its mission—“To inspire people wherever they are to live like Jesus wherever they go”—by investing in the next generation, loving its neighbors and helping its city thrive.

“If you attend our church, you can’t miss it that we are on the goal of being for our city,” says Bryan Muirhead, pastor of development. “It opens up a lot of creativity.... The minute you serve your neighbor, you’re serving God.”

It all began two and a half years ago as the church ran out of space in its kids’ ministry.

“We believe when someone begins to follow Jesus, it affects them and in turn affects the people and the world around them in positive ways,” said lead pastor Forrest Jenan in a March 5, 2017, message kicking off the “For Visalia” campaign.

“It’s why our mission is very, very simple here at Neighborhood Church,” Jenan said. “We believe our best next step toward accomplishing this mission is to address some of the challenges we face right here on our campus, and here’s the challenge: We are out of space in our kids’ ministry.”

Three years ago, Neighborhood averaged 250 to 260 children, birth through sixth graders, on Sunday morning. Today, that number is between 500 to 520 and reached 650 on Easter Sunday.

“This is an incredible time to be a part of our church, but we can’t just enjoy what’s been handed down to us,” Jenan said in his March 5 message. “We need to move the story forward. We need to express what it looks like in our generation for Neighborhood Church to be a church that is ‘For Visalia.’ We don’t have to change the world, but we have to change something. The little faces in Visalia, they’re our something.”

Kids have been a priority at Neighborhood since the church began. In the 1940s, Bob and Lucille Willems moved to Visalia and served cupcakes and provided a volleyball net for the children who walked to school past their house. Soon, parents came and brought their friends.

In time, the gathering became known as Neighborhood Church and moved from the Willems’ front yard to a pub to a field in northwest Visalia, where neighborhoods sprung up around it.

As church staff planned the “For Visalia” campaign, they found notes from an elder meeting 30 years ago affirming Neighborhood’s focus on families and children.

“Thinking about Jesus and his ministry and the times where the children ran to him, all they want is to be close,” Muirhead says. “They just want proximity. We started thinking about that



The “For Visalia” campaign was prompted by a need to expand ministry space for the growing number of children who are part of Neighborhood Church. *Photo Credit: Dale Best*

and how do we bring better proximity. Well, we have to create an environment. We have to create better space.”

Neighborhood launched its “For Visalia” campaign in March 2017. The plan includes 10,000 square feet in two new Neighborhood Kids buildings, 2,000 square feet of new office space, 100 new parking spaces, a shade structure outside the auditorium lobby and lighting and water fountains in Houston Neighborhood Park. MB Foundation is helping with project funding.

The space will also be used to host small groups and serve the community.

“We realized it was for our city,” Muirhead says. “We wanted this for the people in Visalia, not just for our church so that we could grow, but so that our city can be better. That’s how this whole ‘For Visalia’ thing started. It started out as a campaign idea and then quickly revolutionized into a culture of support for one another (and) love for our city.”

“For Visalia” has changed Neighbor-

hood’s culture—Sunday services, church events and everyday life. The campaign gained traction with “For Visalia” magnets, T-shirts and merchandise.

The church uses strategic language to signify how it is and can be for its community and hosts services like Easter For Visalia and Christmas For Visalia.

“For Visalia’ has been a way not only for us to remind people that we’re supposed to care about our city, but even to take the Bible and cast it in a new light, in this Jesus lens, that Jesus is for us,” Muirhead says. “He’s for you, so the best thing we can do is be for our city.”

It’s also why, in April, Neighborhood hosted its second-annual “S’more Visalia” event, which included live music, fire pits for making s’mores, food trucks and inflatables. Between 2,700 and 3,000 people attended.

“We really want to set up our campus as a light for our city (where) you can belong before you believe,” Muirhead

says. “We want to remind our people that we’re for them, regardless of what they believe, (and) that they have a place that loves them and cares for them.”

In the community, being “For Visalia” might look like paying for the next meal in the drive-thru line, supporting local restaurants in low-income neighborhoods, buying someone’s coffee using the church Starbucks card, filling school teachers’ boxes with gifts, hosting a young adult small group at a local brewery or wearing “For Visalia” shirts while frequenting local restaurants and tipping well.

“It’s been so common, this idea of, ‘Let’s just get them the news—the reality that Jesus raised from the dead,’” Muirhead says. “Well, guess what? That’s a crazy reality we’re asking people to believe.

“If we really want to convince them that this is real, then we need to act like

it’s real,” Muirhead says. “We tell people all the time, ‘Belong before you believe,’ because by belonging, once they’re authentic and they’re safe and they feel like they can be their true selves, then they find salvation very quickly.”

Neighborhood has seen a 7 percent increase in attendance over the past year and is averaging 15 to 20 first-time guests each Sunday. Neighborhood plans to finish its new building by the end of August, hoping to host 600 to 650 kids per Sunday, Muirhead says.

Beyond the campaign, the church plans to continue to love its city. In November, Neighborhood will launch a new event—a prom for people with special needs.

“From the get-go, this has not been about getting people to come to Neighborhood Church, but getting people to remember, and maybe even to believe for the first time, that Jesus-followers are

actually for their city and for the people that live there,” Muirhead says, adding later: “When people realize there’s a city filled with love, it’s contagious, and then they start to ask the question, ‘Where is this love coming from?’, and my hope is that the answer is Neighborhood Church.” —*Janae Rempel* ■

Laurelglen members minister to refugees

Volunteers are Christ’s hands, feet in Greece

Volunteers from Laurelglen Bible Church in Bakersfield, Calif., recently experienced firsthand the work that God is doing in the hearts and lives of refugees in Eastern Europe as part of a short-term mission trip to Athens, Greece.

Trip leaders Doug and Myra Gentry have been a part of the Laurelglen family for many years. Myra was a charter member of the church and Doug began attending in 1991. The couple has a background in missions, having lived in Portugal, Rome and London as well as participating in and leading other short-term trips with Laurelglen.

While in Rome, the Gentrys worked with refugees through an organization called International Teams, since renamed One Collective. It was through this organization that they first became aware of a refugee ministry in Athens called Helping Hands.

In the fall of 2016, Doug and Myra traveled to Athens along with another couple on an unofficial, self-funded trip. They stayed for two months and became acquainted with the people and mission of Helping Hands.

On returning, they shared about their trip with friends Mick and Debra Swen, also longtime attendees of Laurelglen. When the Gentrys made plans for a return trip to Athens in March and April of this year, Mick and Debra decided to join for two weeks of the six-week trip.

Considering becoming a pastor or missionary in the MB family?
Need financial assistance as you explore your ministry potential?
Know someone who needs help in developing as a leader?

LEAD GEN

LEADERSHIP GENERATION FUND

For an application, or to review scholarship requirements, go to mbfoundation.com/LeadGen. If you have any questions, please direct them to LeadGen@mbfoundation.com.



620.947.3151
800.551.1547 Toll Free
info@mbfoundation.com
www.mbfoundation.com



Doug and Myra Gentry, Rille Pinault, LBC missions director, and LBC pastor Eric Burns and his wife, Fawn, stand on Mars Hill, where Paul addressed the Council of Areopagus in Acts 17.

Photo credit: LBC

“We wanted to expose people in our church both to cross-cultural ministry and to Muslim and refugee ministry,” Doug says.

He and Myra stayed in Athens for the full six weeks, while other volunteers came for a few days or weeks at a time.

Helping Hands has existed for more than 20 years and has always been refugee-focused, although the demographics have shifted. Currently, the center focuses on refugees from Iran and Afghanistan who speak Farsi, also known as Persian Language.

Volunteers and staff hail from many countries, including Finland, Germany, the Philippines, Holland, the United States and Great Britain.

“That was almost as much fun as meeting the refugees—meeting people that have a heart for it from all over the world,” Debra says.

Helping Hands provides meals, laundry services, showers and Greek and English language classes, as well as Bible studies for both men and women.

Once a week, the center has a “women’s day” when no men are allowed in the building, and the women are able to relax in a safe environment, remove head coverings to do each other’s hair and use the center’s sewing

machines to alter or repair clothing.

During their time in Athens, the volunteers from Laurelglenn helped with the everyday tasks required to keep the center running.

“The idea was to go over and take the place of what the staff has to do in the way of work, such as kitchen preparation, mopping floors and doing laundry, to free up the staff who speak Farsi fluently to spend more time one-on-one with the refugees,” says Debra.

While the language barrier was a struggle, Debra says the Laurelglenn volunteers were still able to build relationships with refugees by just taking the time to engage with them.

“If you’re willing to just put time aside, which Americans are not very good at doing, and sit and talk as long as it takes, struggling through the language barrier, some of those conversations were incredibly rewarding,” she says.

While the pain and hardship experienced by the refugees was evident, so also was the redeeming work of Christ being done in many lives.

“So many of the people in the Muslim world do not have a clear picture of what Christians are,” Myra says. “Because these refugees are being displaced, when they come into areas where they’re being

ministered to by Christian believers, it changes their perspective substantially.”

Doug adds that many of the people are “blown away” by the love they experience from Christians.

At Helping Hands, the gospel is presented daily through preaching, Bible studies, showings of The Jesus Film and conversation. Refugees who have become believers themselves often take the lead in sharing the gospel.

“They know the people and the culture, so they can really speak from the heart,” says Myra.

About a mile from the ministry center sits Mars Hill, where Paul addressed the Council of Areopagus in Acts 17. The volunteers from Laurelglenn traveled to the hill to read from this Scripture passage. Acts 17:26-27 in the New Living Translation reads, “From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.”

Doug says it is nearly impossible to go into countries like Iran or Afghanistan to preach the gospel, “but God is moving them out, and he’s bringing them to places where they’re exposed to it and many, many are responding.”

One of the Greek staff members at Helping Hands commented to Mick that they were “privileged to be witnessing a massive exodus from Islam driven by the Christian ministry in Europe.”

Volunteers also saw refugees communicating what they were learning about the gospel and Christianity to family members who are still in their home countries.

“People are closely tied to their families that are still deep in Iran and Afghanistan,” Debra says. “They are being very exposed to the gospel message, and they are not rejecting it. Not all of them are embracing it, but they are hearing it and they are finding it different than they thought it was.”

The volunteers heard stories of the growing underground church, specifi-

cally in Iran. But those who do convert away from Islam regularly face persecution.

“They’re turning their back on their culture and their home country,” says Doug. “They really, truly have to count the cost before they make that decision.”

Both couples emphasize the need for U.S. believers to understand the refugee crisis and empathize with those who have been displaced.

“They have the same concerns that we do,” says Doug. “They want safety and security for their family and a future. They want their kids to be educated. They’re fleeing for their lives and they’re fleeing for the benefit of their families.”

While Laurelglenn has no immediate plans for another trip to Athens, Doug and Myra do plan to return in the future. They hope to be a model of a Christ-like response to the current refugee crisis, acting out of love rather than fear. — *Jessica Allen* ▀

Convention will celebrate diversity, missional unity

USMB pastors, leaders to serve as speakers

When U.S. Mennonite Brethren gather in Salt Lake City, Utah, July 24-28 for the biennial National Pastors’ Conference (Tuesday evening through Thursday noon) and National Convention (Thursday evening through Saturday noon), the focus will be on celebrating our diversity and the mission that unites the 200-plus congregations that comprise the U.S. Conference of MB Churches.

Whereas past conventions often featured evangelical Christian speakers from outside the Mennonite Brethren family, this year convention organizers chose speakers from USMB churches. Keynote addresses will be given by six USMB pastors and leaders; the seventh speaker, who is with MB Mission,



The theme of the 2018 biennial gathering is “Celebrating our diversity and unity,” and meal times at the USMB National Pastors’ Conference and Convention are excellent opportunities to learn to know a variety of people from around the country. This photo is from the 2016 Pastors’ Conference in Denver; the 2018 event will be in Salt Lake City. *Photo credit: CL*

serves internationally in restricted-access countries.

Convention speakers are Aaron Hernandez, La Grulla, Texas; Winnie Bartel, Shafter, Calif.; and Eric Nelson, Lehi, Utah. National Pastors’ Conference speakers are Terry Hunt, Lenoir, NC; Brent Warkentin, Wichita, Kan.; and Henock Tsegaye, Olathe, Kan.

Music teams from two Utah USMB congregations will lead in worship.

USMB pastors and ministry leaders from Tabor College, Fresno Pacific University, MB Mission and Mennonite Central Committee will serve as presenters at nine workshops during the National Convention.

Pastoral staff members attending the National Pastors’ Conference will choose from five Wednesday workshops and can attend affinity group discussions Thursday morning.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to learn about ministry in Salt Lake City (SLC), world headquarters of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church). The Salt Lake Valley is home to South Mountain Community Church (SMCC), a multi-site USMB church planted in 1998 that today has six campuses in five locations, and Greenhouse Community Church, a small USMB congregation begun in 2013 with an organic approach to church planting.

MB Foundation, the U.S. MB stew-

ardship ministry, is sponsoring an optional bus tour Thursday afternoon that will include a stop at the 10-acre Temple Square in downtown SLC and visits to several SMCC campuses. The tour will highlight the grip of Mormonism in SLC and the impact Mennonite Brethren have had in the region.

Paul Robie, SMCC lead pastor, will talk about various aspects of the Mormon culture, beliefs and practices as part of the Friday afternoon workshops. Convention goers will gather at SMCC Draper for the Friday night worship service.

“Business items will be light but normal,” says Don Morris, USMB national director, about the two business sessions. “We’ll discuss budgets, vote on various board nominations and there will be presentations pertaining to upcoming events.”

Other items on the business session agenda include a report from the U.S. Board of Faith and Life, an affirmation of the MB Historical Commission memorandum of understanding and a visionary conference message by Morris.

Reports from eight Mennonite Brethren ministries will be scattered throughout the six convention sessions. The C2C USA church planting report will be given Friday night at SMCC Draper, a fitting location given the church’s focus on church planting and evangelism. Other ministries that

will report are the *Christian Leader*, USMB Youth, MB Mission, Historical Commission, MB Foundation, Fresno Pacific University, Tabor College and the International Community of Mennonite Brethren. Mennonite Central Committee will host an alumni gathering Thursday evening.

Activities for children and youth will be available for the National Pastors' Conference and National Convention.

Both events will take place at the University Guest House and Conference Center on the University of Utah campus in Fort Douglas. The Guest House is a hotel-type venue in a very quiet area of the campus. The USMB conference rate includes a deluxe complimentary breakfast. Lunch and dinner will be at The Heritage Center dining facility which offers a large selection of food, including special dietary items, in a cafeteria-style "all you can eat" buffet. Meal costs are included in the registration fee.

The University of Utah is located 10 miles from the airport, or a 15- to 20-minute drive. There are Super Shuttle and other express shuttles available, as well as taxis. Salt Lake Valley's light rail system, UTA TRAX, runs from the airport to the university and stops just below the Guest House. There is also a free shuttle system that operates throughout the campus.—*Connie Faber* ▀

Douglas to serve USMB as C2C church planting mobilizer

USMB has role to play in God's plan to reach the lost, says Douglas

Chris Douglas began working this summer as the regional director and U.S. church planting mobilizer with

MB Mission and C2C USA. He replaces Scott Thomas, who has shifted to working part-time for C2C due to his wife's ongoing health issues.

Douglas lives in Boise, Idaho, with his wife Dianne (pictured right.) They have three daughters, one son-in-law and a granddaughter on the way. He is a graduate of Lutheran Bible Institute and was a youth pastor and young adult pastor in the U.S. before serving as senior pastor at Central Heights Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation in Abbotsford, BC. He joined C2C in 2011.

In this interview Douglas talks with CL freelance writer Kathy Heinrichs Wiest via email about his call to ministry and his work with C2C USA.

CL: How did you come to faith in Christ?

CD: I was baptized as an infant by my great uncle who was a Lutheran pastor. At age 14, though, my parents sent me to Bible camp where I surrendered my life to Jesus and was baptized on confession of my faith.

CL: How did your call to ministry come about?

CD: It was very much like Jonah's call to go to Nineveh. I started as a youth pastor in a Lutheran church but decided I wasn't cut out for the ministry and began preparing for law school. I was on the run from God and his call on my life and worked for several years in the insurance industry. But God eventually gripped my heart and called me back into ministry.

CL: Has church planting always been a primary focus of your ministry?

CD: My first pastorate after God called me back into ministry was at Overlake Christian Church in Redmond, Wash. Overlake's leadership had a mindset of gaining by losing, so they were a church that planted churches. Since then, church planting has woven its way in and out of



Photo credit: Chris Douglas

all my ministry, including helping to plant two ethnic churches while at Central Heights in Abbotsford, BC.

CL: What is a recent church planting story that inspires you?

CD: Maple Ridge Community Church (MRCC) in Maple Ridge, BC, is a church of some 250 people with the same kingdom mindset and passion to reach the lost. Two years ago, they sent 50 adults with a church planter to plant Jubilee Church. Dianne and I attended MRCC before moving to Boise, and they were already full again and trying to figure out how to make room for more. Personally, I think they should plant again.

CL: Why did you come back to serve in the U.S.?

CD: The U.S. is the country of my birth—a country I love dearly. God is moving in our country and has raised up men and women who are passionate about reaching the lost. If, in some small way, God would use Dianne and me to be a blessing to our Mennonite Brethren tribe and serve him in what he's already doing here in the U.S., I'd be thrilled.

CL: What have you learned through involvement in MB church planting in the Canadian context?

CD: For some reason, God's hand seems to be on a small little tribe of believers in Canada called Mennonite Brethren who live in a country in the shadow of the much larger United States. What is happening among our Canadian MB brothers and sisters in the arena of church planting and influencing other believers is disproportionate to our size. It is something that only God can do.

CL: C2C has grown into an interdenominational agency. What do you foresee for the Mennonite Brethren in a national church planting endeavor in the U.S.?

CD: God is always taking what is seemingly small and insignificant and

using it for his glory. You can look back throughout history and see God taking the smallest nation, the smallest tribe, the smallest clan and using them to be a blessing, to chart a new course, to fulfill his purposes. I'm convinced that God is up to something that will drive us to our knees, dependent upon nothing other than his indwelling power and presence. We have a role to play, however big or small that is, in being used of God to reach the lost locally, nationally and globally.

CL: How will you interact with USMB churches?

CD: My responsibility in this new role is to come alongside of MB churches, pastors, districts and leaders to help them, to serve them in accomplishing the mission and vision that God has given them. I'm looking to be a resource for them, a catalyzer to help them in sharing and liv-

ing out their passion and vision and to be a support for them as they obediently follow Jesus' command to go and make disciples.

CL: How is the U.S. context different from the Canadian?

CD: Today, in terms of secularization, Canada is much further along than the U.S. I've heard it said that Canada is so post-Christian that it's pre-Christian. It's come full circle. But we're losing ground here in the U.S.—just a decade or two behind Canada in becoming a secular nation. And yet, I believe God is on the move. I'm encouraged by the people I'm meeting and getting to know as Dianne and I transition back home to the U.S. I'm heartened by the stories I hear from our MB tribe about mission that is taking place locally, nationally and globally.

CL: What are some challenges you anticipate?

CD: The challenges we face today as followers of Jesus are great. While we're not facing persecution like in other parts of the world, increasingly we're being marginalized because of our Christian faith. Further, as a nation it seems there is increasing division in our country between competing cultures, differing political ideologies, those who have and have not, between the secular and the sacred. I think the great challenge we face in this era of divisiveness is the maintaining of unity and the commonality of purpose. But that challenge is also our great opportunity! We have the chance to live out the fulfillment of Jesus's high priestly prayer in John 17 and show the world who Jesus is through our unity and love for one another.

CL: What is a Scripture that motivates you in your work?

CD: My passion is for the fame, glory and renown of Jesus. Paul tells us in Ephesians 3 that through the church God's wisdom is displayed and made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. I want to see that happen more and more as local expressions of Christ's body are planted, grown and reproduced. ▀

Handcrafted Ministry Design

Earn a M.A. in Ministry Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Tabor College
Wichita & Online
(316) 729-6333
tabor.edu/mei
learn@tabor.edu

Contact us and ask about the Adult & Graduate Studies discount for MB members/attenders.

Life, ministry coach maximizes potential

Coach's job is to ask the right questions

USMB has offered life and ministry coaching for pastors and ministry leaders for many years and continues to enhance this program. As part of USMB's LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) initiative, LEAD Coaching is an intentional, ongoing life-on-life relationship with a trained coach that empowers leaders to realize their full potential, living and leading with purpose, confidence, courage and joy.

The coaching process involves exploring the current reality of the life of a leader and then creating a new map of where they desire to be. Coaches are skilled at listening, asking powerful questions, defining goals, helping a person develop relevant action plans and providing the accountability and support for them to succeed. Coaching significantly raises the bar of life and ministry potential.

"Most days I think the strongest upside of LEAD Coaching is the accountability the regular conversation between coach and coachee provides," says Ed Boschman, lead coach and previous USMB national director. "The partnership is grounded in the fact that the Holy Spirit is in charge of the journey."

USMB national director Don Morris was instrumental in developing the current LEAD Coaching program through connections with Building Champions, a Christian organization that provides professional

life coaching for companies like Chick-fil-A.

"Our LEAD Coaching program is based on Building Champion's core four elements that create effective transformation: a life plan, ministry vision, ministry plan and priority management," Morris says.

"I recently completed a year of LEAD Coaching and every chapter that I was coached through and every book I read as a part of the coaching experience continues to be fruitful," says Paul Canaday, pastor of Grace Community Church in Sanger, Calif. "I wasn't the only one who benefited from the coach. My family and the

part of their pastor's continuing education and development. The church benefits when the pastor/leader is "running smoothly on all cylinders."

"My role as coach is to keep asking the right questions—the kind that lead the coachee to insight and subsequently to goals and then the action items to pursue and achieve them," says Boschman. "It is absolutely appropriate that we take the first few weeks of our year of the coaching partnership for a full 360 review of current life realities, asking questions about the health of our spiritual lives, our marriage and family, our work/ministry and other per-



church I serve also have benefited from the priority management chapter, and the time spent clarifying our mission has blessed the church. I'm thankful for the encouragement I received to take this opportunity, and I was blessed to have Ed Boschman as my coach. I recommend that every leader take and make the most of this opportunity."

The cost for LEAD Coaching has been kept to a minimum, costing far less than typical pastoral coaching. Scholarships are available if the pastor/leader cannot pay for it themselves. Also, many churches see the high value for their pastor to experience coaching and provide for it as

sonal priorities. Sometimes our priorities are pretty messed up and need to be redefined and reordered."

Being coached has a way of maximizing personal fulfillment and effectiveness. Therefore, USMB encourages many more pastors and ministry leaders to take advantage of this program, asking: In terms of your ministry or your personal life, what's important to you? What are your dreams? What would it feel like to live at your full potential? Interested? Go to the USMB website (www.usmb.org) to find out more and learn how to get started.—USMB

“ Coaching significantly raises the bar of life and ministry potential. ”

The power of discipleship

What will others remember about your faith?

My dad, John F. Wiebe, passed from this earthly life April 23, 2018, to the glory that awaits all who believe in the name of Jesus. As we reflected on his life, one theme that was evident to all who knew him was his anticipation of Christ's return and his study of prophecy and the end times. Part of Dad's legacy is to watch and wait. To live expectantly for our coming King.

Back in the day, our family performed songs like *The King Is Coming*, *There Is a River*, *I Wish We'd All Been Ready* to urge audiences to be ready. To instill an expectation and hope in Christ's second coming. This is part of Dad's legacy.

What will your legacy be? One of the new tenants of our national family is intentional discipleship. The legacy we leave behind is a powerful way to intentionally disciple our family and friends. How is your life influencing others to grow as a disciple? What will people remember about your faith when your earthly existence is no more?

I had the special privilege of cleaning out my dad's study. Although he'd only lived in the house about 20 years, I was impressed by the number of white papers on different Bible passages or biblical themes. Index cards scattered about with various Bible verses. And several shelves of books on prophecy and the second coming. This too reflects part of Dad's legacy.

David Green, founder of Hobby Lobby, says in his book, *Giving It All Away*, "Our call in this day and age is to preserve and to pass on our story—our legacy—to those coming after us. Our children. Our grandchildren. Our great-grandchildren. Even those children we never know or see." Passing on a legacy is intentional disciple-making

and has the power to affect many, within your family and without, with deep spiritual values.

A few years ago, I became involved in processing an estate gift where the parents had made provision for a 10 percent charitable gift. From the start, the siblings were at odds with us as we attempted to carry out the parents' wishes. Eventually, they became at odds with each other so much that one resigned as co-executor so she wouldn't have to work with her brother. A legacy is marred, a discipleship opportunity squandered.

Recently, I've been privileged to work with a family whose parents left a significant estate with multigenerational wealth at stake. They have methodically stewarded these resources for kingdom benefit. They established a mission statement for these funds that honors their parents, while directing future generations to use these funds in ways that further the gospel and brings honor to Jesus' name. This is a legacy that will fund ministry and intentionally disciple future generations of family and nonfamily.

What story are you writing for future generations to read? How is your life—how will your death—point others closer to Christ or away from him? From my vantage point, we have a tremendous opportunity to influence others, to intentionally disciple others, through the legacy we live...and leave.

My dad wasn't perfect. We can point out his imperfections. But the legacy he left was impressed on us at an early age and was reinforced in the story he left behind.

May your story, and mine, be further evidence of God's faithfulness and encourage many to a closer walk of discipleship. ▀



Jon Wiebe has served since 1998 as president and CEO of MB Foundation, the stewardship ministry serving U.S. Mennonite Brethren. He is a graduate of Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan., and the University of Denver, Colo. He is an active member of Parkview MB Church in Hillsboro. He and his wife, Ellynne, have two married sons.

MILESTONES

BAPTISM/ MEMBERSHIP

Alexandra Dangelo, Dominic Dangelo, Ryan Ogden, Cade Vidal and Joseph Mayer were baptized at **Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

David Bloemhof IV, Ryan Enns, Alex Gonzalez and Philip Wolfe were baptized and received as members at **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church** June 3.

Hannah Glanzer and Marlana Wollman were received as members at **Bethel MB Church, Yale, S.D.**, June 3.

Alexandria Adams, Kara Snyder, Lenny Bettencourt, Shelby Edler, Kaden Hofheins, Cason Elhart, Caitlin Barlow, Brad Millet, Cami Mondeax, Malory Adamson and Alana Reynolds were baptized at **South Mountain Community Church, Draper (Utah) Campus** May 20.

Dallas Pruitt was baptized and received as a member at **Buhler (Kan.) MB Church** May 13. Megan Pruitt and Ellie Jones were also received as members.

Jevin Harper, Collin Waker, Hanna Hester and Lynn James were baptized at South Mountain Community Church, **St. George (Utah) Campus** April 29.

Carlos Rangel, Heidi Rangel, Joshua Rangel, Abigail Aguilar and Selina Aguilar were baptized and received as members at **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, April 29. Sarah Cornell, Andrea Roney and Tracy Dixon were also received as members.

Mary Norris, Brianna Norris and Linda Norris were baptized at **Garden Park Church, Denver, Colo.**, April 1. Will Lee was baptized and received as a member on April 15.

Brooklyn Alexander, Kyle Hood, Kirby Hood, Hunter Schrock and Madi Meacham were baptized at **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, April 8.

Lily Wyatt, Joyce Gardner, Coral McNeal, Carly Mattern, Corbin Warwick, Gavin Warwick and Balin Warwick were baptized at **Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, April 8. Bill Frankhouser, Zelma Frankhouser, Annette Russ, TJ Whitaker, Tamara Whitaker, Ayodele Oni, Joe

Cabalka, Kristen Cabalka, Ernst Leiss and Elise Leiss were received as members on March 25.

Stacie Myers was baptized at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church** April 1. Brad Gorsuch was baptized and received as a member on Feb. 25. Staci Gorsuch and Carrie Stasch were also received as members.

Kristel Collazo, Aurelio Salazar, Lexi Smith, Josiah Smith, Briana Smith, Joshua Heinrichs and Anjelique Ruelas were baptized at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church** April 1. Steve Bryan was received as a member.

Cory Bathhauer, Christian Bathhauer, Emily Clark, Preston Pauls and Joel Reimer were baptized at **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church** April 1.

Eight people were baptized at **Trailhead Church, Littleton, Colo.**, April 1.

Addison Schmidt, Grace Bowden, Reed Martens, Baustin Prather and Isaiah Burris were baptized at **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** April 1. Aaron Helm, Leroy Bartel and Marilyn Bartel were received as members.

Four people were baptized at **Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz.**, April 1.

Michael Acosta, Lisa Borquez, Emmanuella Iwebor and Dwight Hackett were received as members at **Butler Church, Fresno, Calif.**, March 25. Three people were baptized.

WORKERS

MaKenna Cummings and Molly Enns are serving as summer ministry interns at **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church**, May 20 to Aug. 17.

Kara Schlotthauer and Mandi Hielt are summer interns at **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church**.

Stephen Christian concluded his ministry as Kids Ministry pastor at **First MB Church, Wichita, Kan.**, June 15. Alison Nikkel, Landee Gutshall and Leslie Hines are serving as interns.

William Martin is serving as summer intern at **North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan.**

Hal Penner concluded his ministry as Pastor of Student Ministries at **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, May 27 after nearly 24 years of service.

Michael Beye was commissioned as Worship Ministries Leader at **Buhler (Kan.) MB Church** May 6.

Trailhead Church dissolves after 12-year ministry

Trailhead Church, a 12-year-old USMB congregation in Littleton, Colo., held its final gathering May 20, 2018, with a theme of "Benediction." Following a time of worship and prayer, the congregation shared a meal together.

In the two months prior to the final service, Trailhead undertook an intentional process to attempt to end well, says lead pastor Trevor Lee, who came to Trailhead in July 2013.

A Mennonite Brethren church plant, Trailhead was started by Jeff and Lianne Nikkel in 2006. The church first met in the Nikkels' basement, then the Goodson Recreation Center, before meeting in the facilities of two other churches.

Highlights of church life included Easter Sunday baptisms, growth experienced by people in groups and acts of service to schools, the parks department and a variety of area nonprofit organizations, Lee says.

Other staples were second Sunday service projects, church retreats, camping trips, sharing dinner together in the park once a month during the summer, a mission trip to Sierra Leone, a youth mission trip to downtown Denver and the annual Justice Run.

"While we never look forward to a church closing, we also must recognize the positive impact on the lives of people who have been forever changed by the ministry and mission of the individuals and families who attended there," says SDC district minister Tim Sullivan. "The face of Denver, or at least a portion of it, was forever changed because of the vision and mission of Trailhead Church."

Ann Ellis has concluded her ministry as Children's Ministry Director at **Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb.**

Steve Bomar has concluded his ministry as Associate Pastor of Worship and Life Group Director at **North Fresno (Calif.) Church.**

Jane Hull retired from her ministry as Children's Ministry Director at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.,** May 31.

Will Lee was hired as Director of Community Formation at **Garden Park Church, Denver, Colo.**

Brian Thiessen has concluded his service as facilities assistant at **Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church.**

Mark and Laurie Isaac have been called to serve as lead pastor couple at **Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church.**

Roger and Jeanne Poppen have returned to Bakersfield, Calif., where Roger will serve in a part-time pastoral care and teaching ministry role at **Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**

Roger served as lead pastor at Laurelglen for two decades before entering semi-retirement and an intentional interim ministry in Prescott, Ariz.

Lead pastor Brian Wiebe was ordained as an MB minister of the gospel April 22 at **Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif.**

Gayle Hofer has been hired to serve as co-administrative assistant at **Bethesda Church, Huron, S.D.**

DEATHS

Bartel, Pete, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, July 23, 1920—May 4, 2018. Parents: C. V. and Lydia (Kliwer) Bartel. Spouse: Salome (Kroeker) Bartel, deceased. Children: Rhoda Enns; Phil; Lydia Wall; Lois Kruger, deceased; nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren.

Baxa, Ronald Joseph, Topeka, Kan., member of Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, April

17, 1957—April 28, 2018. Parents: Joseph, Jr. and Eleanor Baxa. Spouse: Janet (Johnson) Baxa, deceased. Children: Brian, Greg; three grandchildren.

Channita, Nouth, Fresno, Calif., member of Butler Church, Asian Grace congregation, April 4, 1950—March 6, 2018. Spouse: Bounmy Channita; three children.

Glaze, Clarence Dewitt, Jr., Enid, Okla., of Enid MB Church, July 24, 1928—June 2, 2018. Parents: Clarence Dewitt, Sr., and Eunice Pitts Glaze. Spouse: Jeanne; Barbara; Mary (Osburn) Glaze. Children: Marilyn Murray, Terry, Terrell, Michelle Atterson; 10 grandchildren.

Jost, Irene Ruth (Fertig), Hillsboro, Kan., member of Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church, April 1, 1921—Feb. 25, 2018. Parents: Roy and Ruth (Yocum) Fertig. Spouse: Robert "Bob" Clinton Jost, deceased. Children: Roger, deceased; Robetta Trapp; Lynn; Nancy Ozick; five grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.

Kliwer, Herald J., Dinuba, Calif., member of Dinuba MB Church, June 3, 1940—April 12, 2018. Parents: Henry and Eva (Peters) Kliwer. Spouse: Phyllis (Isaac) Kliwer. Children: Nathan, Shaila, Brandon; four grandchildren.

Martens, Ann, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, July 18, 1923—May 8, 2018. Parents: Henry and Elisabeth (Esau) Koehn. Spouse: Stan Martens, deceased. Children: Jon, deceased; Liz Oliver; Jerry, deceased; Joel; three grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.

Martens, Wilfred James, Fresno, Calif., member of Willow Avenue Mennonite Church. Fresno Pacific University professor emeritus of English; Jan. 25, 1935—March 2, 2018. Parents: Abe N. and Katie L. Schroeter Martens. Spouse: Erma Friesen. Children: Suzanne Schellenberg, Linda Martens; three grandchildren.

Parker, Eudine (Meech), Enid, Okla., former member of Enid MB Church, March 26, 1927—

May 10, 2018. Parents: Gordon and Clara Meech. Spouse: Willmer Parker, deceased. Children: Bob, Karen Nickel; one grandchild, one great-grandchild.

Penner, Herbert, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, Jan. 11, 1924—May 14, 2018. Parents: William and Martha (Gertz) Penner. Spouse: Jessie (Hiebert) Penner, deceased; Ella (Buhler) Penner. Children: Loel; one grandchild.

Reimer, William C., Reedley, Calif., member of Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church, April 1, 1928—April 14, 2018. Parents: Peter and Ann (Friesen) Reimer. Spouse: Grace (Driedger) Reimer. Children: Sidney, Marvin, Peter, Larry and Linette Farnsworth; seven grandchildren.

Toews, Ervin H., Dinuba, Calif., member of Dinuba MB Church, April 3, 1931—April 16, 2018. Parents: Henry and Elizabeth Toews. Spouse: Darlene (Wiest) Toews. Children: Erlynn Bock, Thomas, Connie Christensen, Tamara Nuckles, six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren.

Walter, Martha (Mendel), Freeman, S.D., member of Salem MB Church, Bridgewater, S.D., Jan. 15, 1926—Feb. 25, 2018. Parents: Jacob H. and Sarah Mendel. Spouse: Isaac I. Walter, Jr., deceased. Children: Terry Cooper.

Warkentin, Mildred, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, Feb. 28, 1928—April 24, 2018. Parents: Cornelius K. and Anna (Suderman) Brandt. Spouse: Ernest Warkentin, deceased. Children: Joan Harder, Dennis, Roger; seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild.

Wedel, Goldie Emma (Hofer), Huron, S.D., member of Bethel MB Church, Yale, S.D., Dec. 16, 1930—March 20, 2018. Parents: Joshua (Josua) J. and Anna Hofer. Spouse: Palmer Wedel, deceased. Children: Winona Stahl; Paul, deceased; Helen, deceased; three grandchildren; two great-grandchildren.

Elizondo remembered for faithful service

Jose Elizondo, Jr., former Pacific District Conference associate minister and MB pastor, died May 4, 2018, at the age of 82. "Jose had a heart of compassion for hurting people and developed a food distribution ministry when he saw severe needs," says Gary Wall, PDC minister. "I appreciated Jose's commitment and dedication as he sought to advance Christ's kingdom throughout the Hispanic community and beyond. We will certainly miss his presence in the PDC but rejoice that he is present with the Lord whom he loved."

He was born on Aug. 9, 1935, in Weslaco, Texas, to Jose Sr., and Tomasa Elizondo, the oldest of 12 children. In 1945, Elizondo migrated west with his family to Sanger, Calif. Elizondo gave his life to Jesus at Del Rey Baptist Church, where he met his wife, Mary Lou Rivera. They were married in August 1974.

After Elizondo's seemingly lifeless newborn daughter lived, Elizondo agreed to attend seminary, something others had been encouraging him to do. In 1982, he accepted an invitation to pastor Iglesia El Buen Pastor, a small MB congregation in Orange Cove, Calif.

He privately funded a food distribution program the last decade of his life. He donated time to Mennonite Disaster Service.

Elizondo suffered a fatal heart attack while attending a funeral service. A dozen people came forward to give their lives to Christ after the ambulance left the church.

Elizondo is survived by his wife of 43 years, Mary Elizondo; children JoAnn Mares, Joseph III, Nathan, Michael, Israel and Heidi Gonzalez; and 14 grandchildren.

Workneh, Melese, Denver, Colo., of Ethiopian Evangelical Church of Denver, Aurora, Colo., May 15, 1956—Feb. 13, 2018.

REACHING IN

DISCIPLESHIP

Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz., hosted a “Theology Night” June 19. After dinner, the discussion centered on the various approaches to reading and observing the Bible, and created space for questions about hermeneutics, the reliability of Scripture and its relationship to Jesus. The church hosted “A Night of Suffering” June 11, during which six local artists gave their interpretation on the reality of suffering.

Adults and high school students at **Koerner Heights Church, Newton, Kan.**, met together for a summer video series, “NUA: A Fresh Perspective on Faith.” The series helps equip people to explore and understand their faith.

Lighthouse Church, Lakewood, Colo., held three connect classes beginning April 15: “Personality, Spiritually and the Enneagram,” “How to Read and Study the Bible” and “Being a Christian in Your Workplace.” The three-week classes provided continuing opportunities for education and growth in faith.

Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif., held a marriage conference by Healthy Marriage Coalition, June 1-2. The church held a prayer training workshop April 27, to help people learn how to lead someone into salvation or recommitment.

Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., held a five-week “Preparing for Adolescence” class designed for parents of sixth-graders as well as their children.

Ministry team leaders at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**, joined church elders for a two-hour leadership workshop April 22 focusing on purpose, vision, goals and strategic planning.

FELLOWSHIP

Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz., hosted a “Nerd Night” June 29. The free event included multiple gaming systems, TVs, board games and pizza and other refreshments.

Lighthouse Church, Lakewood, Colo., hosted a free movie night in the park June 22. The church hosted “church hangs” after summer Sunday services, including food, games and drinks.

Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif., hosted a women’s Paint and Praise night June 22. The church hosted a twice-a-week summer language course, “A Taste of Spanish” June 19-Aug. 7, and held its first “Rock the Block” party of the summer June 20.

Men at **Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, Kan.**, were invited to a disc golf event June 19. The church held a mother/son superhero date night April 28 and an American Heritage Girls father/daughter event April 15.

First MB Church, Wichita, Kan., hosted an Outcast BMX event June 15, during which professional big ramp bicycle riders put on an acrobatic show. Riders were top Christian BMX athletes.

Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan., hosted a Bunko game night June 10. Freewill donations were accepted for teens going on the servant camp mission trip.

Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif., hosted its first Summer Sunday June 3 with inflatables, free snow cones and food trucks.

The 12th annual Kansas MCC motorcycle ride began at **Koerner Heights Church, Newton, Kan.**, May 20 with coffee and doughnuts. The 100-mile, two-hour ride ended in Buhler. Bikers attended Sunday worship at Buhler MB Church.

Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., held a summer festival June 29 with music, dance, food from multiple cultures and activities for families. The church held its annual church picnic May 20 with an outdoor service at Fresno Pacific University, which included worship, testimony, a message by Pastor Elbio and communion, followed by a picnic lunch and a water balloon-tossing contest.

Cornerstone Community Church, Harvey, N.D., hosted its first annual Teens for Jesus youth rally May 2. Area youth and adults were invited for an evening of music, drama, testimonies and ice cream.

Shafter (Calif.) MB Church hosted a “Sharing your Story” event April 29 designed to help people tell their faith story.

Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., held its annual church picnic April 29 with worship, testimonies, baptisms, a speaker, free lunch, prizes and afternoon activities including a bounce house, water slide, rock climbing wall and hamster wheel races.

Fairview (Okla.) MB Church held its Spring Renewal April 14-15. The event included a Utah Vision Trip report with Jason and Nicole Quiring, meals and inflatables for children.

CELEBRATIONS

Rosedale Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., celebrated a “Grand Reopening and Dedication” of its sanctuary about 50 years after its sanctuary dedication in June 1968. Upgrades include new fabric on pews, a fresh coat of paint on the walls and new carpet, as well as a new sound and lighting system, an extension of the stage and a lift for wheelchair accessibility.

Fairview MB hosts Biker Sunday

A Harley Davidson Sportster and a mini scooter graced the stage of Fairview (Okla.) MB Church April 29. Thirty-five bikes stood parked outside, their riders seated inside with an opportunity to be filled physically and spiritually before heading on a ride.

Biker Sunday is an annual fellowship and outreach event hosted by Fairview MB and includes a meal, a prayer of blessing and a ride designed to bring together riders from multiple churches and to introduce others to church.

The day began with breakfast prepared and served by the church’s missions and evangelism committee, followed by a devotional. Riders sat in reserved seating in the sanctuary for the service, then moved to the parking area for prayer before riding to Woodring Airport in Enid. The group ate in the airport restaurant and toured the airport’s museum.

The ride brought together people from other MB churches, including members of Mennonites on Bikes (MOB) from both Enid and Edmond. Riders also represented the Outback Toy Run MC Club from Aline, Okla., Tulsa #1 Harley Owners Group Chapter, Ladies of Harley and the Outlaws of Oklahoma City, as well as those with no club affiliation. Local bike guests without a home church have also attended.

Laurelglen turns 40

L aurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., celebrated its 40th anniversary at its annual church picnic April 29. Paul Robie, lead pastor of South Mountain Community Church in Utah, and former associate pastor at Laurelglen, spoke. The celebration also included a BBQ dinner at Pin Oak Park, raffle prizes, a pastor getting a pie in the face, games for kids, a dessert competition and snow cones.

Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif., celebrated its 24th anniversary May 6 with a meal, bounce houses, snow cones and cotton candy for children.

WORSHIP

Laurelglen Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., held an outdoor night of worship and reflection April 22. Ice cream and root beer floats were served.

First MB Church, Wichita, Kan., joined with area churches to host public worship gatherings during the week. First MB hosted an hour of worship Monday noon, including singing and prayer.

REACHING OUT

Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., partnered with Athletes In Mission to host a basketball camp, July 5-7, at the Fresno Pacific University gym. The church provided food for the event.

People at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**, were encouraged to take home containers of M&Ms for a Missions and Ministry youth group project. As people ate the M&Ms, they were encouraged to pray for those attending camp in Durango, Colo., later this summer. Empty containers could be returned to church with a donation toward camp.

Cross Timbers Church, Edmond, Okla., organized a group workday at the Hope Center of Edmond June 16. After breakfast at the church, people

sorted clothes and food and helped people unload vehicles.

Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb., held its second annual craft fair and concert June 16. The event included a craft fair with 50-70 vendors, outdoor concert with three bands, food trucks, a free raffle and a bounce house. Proceeds from registration funds went to Stony Brook's benevolence fund for Omaha families in need.

Dinuba (Calif.) MB Church held a bike rodeo for first through sixth grade students May 19. The event included skill stations, ribbons and races and ended with lunch.

Valleyview Bible Church, Cimarron, Kan., invited mothers and their sons from the community and surrounding area to a mother/son banquet at the church April 28. Husbands and daughters were invited to help serve.

People at **Mountain View Community Church, Fresno, Calif.**, were invited to fill baby bottle "banks" with money to donate to the Pregnancy Care Center to be used to provide free and confidential services to women and men in the Fresno area needing counseling, resources and education related to unplanned pregnancies.

People from **Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, Kan.**, participated in community outreach May 5 with other churches and organizations, serving the school district, The Topeka Rescue Mission and Boys and Girls Club of Topeka through landscaping, painting, constructing and cleaning grounds.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church and Every Neighborhood Partnership served brunch to staff and teachers at Robinson Elementary April 13.

People from **Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif.**, gathered with people from other local churches to complete community service projects April 29. Nearly 3,500 people attended Easter for Visalia at the church April 1. The event involved more than 300 volunteers.

College Community Church MB, Clovis, Calif., has changed its name to Willow Avenue Mennonite Church, which the church publicly began using April 1 and announced in an April 24 press release.

Parkview MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., hosted 150 volunteers who made 18,578 verenika for the MCC sale held April 13-14.

Koerner Heights Church, Newton, Kan., provided shift work and meals at New Hope Shelter April 4-10.

Children at **North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan.**, sent letters of encouragement and care packages containing colored pictures, socks, deodorant, toothpaste, Skittles, beef jerky and sunflower seeds to soldiers stationed in Africa.

From **NEWBURG** on page 8

learned to listen to God's voice and repent. As I sat by a lake, God asked me to walk with him along the water. He put his hand on my shoulder, and all I could say was, "I'm so sorry."

I stood in the shallows, letting wave after wave wash over me, cleansing me of guilt and shame. God brought Psalm 42:1 to mind, a song about which I had sung in my pain throughout the drug abuse and violence. When I read it, he flooded my mind with memories, showing me his presence in each of them.

The weekend wrecked me in the greatest ways. I rededicated my life to Christ and have been chasing him ever since. Christy forgave me, and God has restored our marriage. I've become a servant leader at work, where others have placed their faith in Christ as a result of my testimony. I live to be a disciple and fisher of men.

God moved in a radical way when I surrendered my will, and I couldn't imagine life without him. While I still struggle with the temptation of acceptance, God is restoring me. My identity is firmly in Christ. ■

CLEARINGHOUSE

Local Church Job Openings

Associate Pastor: Worship and Music: North Fresno MB Church is seeking a full-time pastor of worship and music for our contemporary service. The church is located in an urban area of the 500,000+ city of Fresno, Calif., and is very involved in the neighborhood. Responsibilities include pastoral leadership and oversight for our contemporary worship ministry. The qualified candidate would also provide leadership to another area depending on their gifting. The candidate should have a passion for Jesus, the church, the city, and demonstrated ability to lead worship in a contemporary setting. To apply please contact Shawna Stocks at sdthiessen@att.net.

Kids' Ministry Pastor: First MB Church, Wichita Kan., is seeking to hire a full-time Kids' Ministry pastor/director responsible for visioning, planning and implementing the comprehensive ministry for children (ages birth through 5th grade) and their parents that coincides with our mission and values, while overseeing 3 PT staff in their department. This would include: creating training opportunities for parents to disciple children in the home; helping to facilitate and/or participate in caregiving, counseling and refer-

ral; developing and implementing communication processes to kids and parents; recruiting, equipping, leading and evaluating volunteer teams; and overseeing Sunday morning and Wednesday night AWANA programming.

Youth Pastor: Garden Valley MB Church, Garden City, Kan., is seeking applicants for a full-time youth pastor with a passion for the spiritual development of youth as disciples of Christ. A full job description is available at www.gardenvalleychurch.com. To apply, please send resume to gvchurch@gmail.com.

Ministry Openings

Planned Giving Advisor: MB Foundation is seeking a servant professional to assist our current and potential constituency in the Pacific District Conference with planned giving solutions such as will planning and lifetime gift plans. Skills should include attention to detail, strengths in communication and listening and the ability to understand and explain financial concepts related to stewardship. Must have a passion for Jesus and the Mennonite Brethren church family. Resumes may be sent to Jon C. Wiebe, MB Foundation, PO Box 220, Hillsboro, KS 67063 or jwiebe@mbfoundation.com. A full job description is available at www.mbfoundation.com/employment.

Revive us again

The world desperately needs Jesus

There is an ever-widening difference for me when I read the Bible compared to reading online world news. When I read the Bible I am soothed, calmed and reminded of God's eternal power, goodness and grace. Then when I read the news it's much about the animosity between certain people, political parties and nations. The one breeds hope and encouragement, the other anxiety and discouragement.

Today I read from John 15 where Jesus says to us, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." Joy. In Christ. Then I went over to a news feed and read this: "Iran and Israel on the brink of war." Jesus, help us!

When I read the Bible I am reminded that its message of God's grace, restoration and forgiveness through Jesus is the answer. When I read the news I realize the world is in a great mess and urgently needs the answer. The world needs Jesus—desperately. We should crave a movement of God to sweep across not only North America, but the world. The world is aching from hurt and pain and needs the radical healing that comes through the gospel. And we are the ambassadors of that good news.

MB family—might we begin to fervently pray for a massive movement of God that will transform our nation before it is too late? Yes, Jesus will return—but likely there is still time for God's love to change the lives of hundreds, thousands, even millions of lost people. The reason we read so much negativity in the news is simply because

people don't yet know Jesus.

MB family—might we please stop squabbling over inane issues and begin to center our passion, energy and resources on helping lost people enter a profound relationship with the King of kings? Might we stop battling over trivial disputes so that people can instead see Jesus in our words and actions and even substitute our tendency to focus on being comfortable, instead giving all we've got so that "some may come to know him?"

Might we invest the substantial resources God has blessed us with for robust kingdom advancement instead of socking it away in some kind of fund that never sees the light of day because we just don't have enough faith that God can and will replenish what we use? Might we corporately begin praying like crazy for this movement of God—a movement that swells in our churches, districts and national agencies?

MB family—let's vigorously plant many new churches that have a passion for reaching people that currently are headed for an eternity separated from the goodness and love of God. Let's work diligently toward kindling a fire of intense mission in our existing churches that they would become surging bastions of God's saving grace. As a USMB family, "Lord, forgive us when we've allowed our plans to get in the way of yours. Lead us in new ways for reaching the lost. Heal us from our apathy. Charge us with your vision for changing the eternal destiny of those you have created. May you use us for a God-given movement that changes everything locally, nationally and globally. Revive us again!"



Don Morris began serving as the USMB national director Aug. 1, 2016. Prior to accepting this new position, Morris served as the USMB interim executive director for two years and as the director of Mission USA since 2004. He and his wife, Janna, live in Edmond, Okla., where they attend Cross Timbers Church.



EARN *a rate of return!* **& BUILD** *the Kingdom!*

We have raised our rates to help you build your savings. At the same time your investment helps us provide funding to growing churches, helping them reach their **full ministry potential**.

CURRENT CERTIFICATE RATES

DEMAND
CERTIFICATE

0.40%

ADVANTAGE
CERTIFICATE

0.85%

TERM CERTIFICATES

1 YEAR

1.85%

2 YEAR

2.10%

3 YEAR

2.40%

4 YEAR

2.65%

5 YEAR

2.90%

All rates variable

START *your investment today at:*

www.mbfoundation.com/invest



620.947.3151
800.551.1547 Toll Free
info@mbfoundation.com
www.mbfoundation.com

The purchase of MBLF's securities is subject to risks, which are described in our Offering Circular. This is not an offer to sell you our securities and we are not soliciting you to buy our securities. We will offer and sell our securities only in states where authorized. The offering is made solely by the Offering Circular. Not FDIC or SIPC Insured. Not a Bank Deposit. No U.S. Conference Guarantee.