

CHRISTIAN LEADER

THE MAGAZINE OF U.S. MENNONITE BRETHREN

MAY/JUNE 2023



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Open and shut

Sharing our testimonies involves talking and listening

The graphic illustration of zippered lips and the headline, “*Zip it! The power of saying less*,” on the cover of the Jan. 30, 2023, issue of Time magazine caught my attention. The article by Dan Lyons is about the challenge of being an overtalker, someone who talks too much in every context and setting. Lyons writes that while the gift of gab can help an overtalker advance professionally, there are significant downsides to the inability to stop talking, even when doing so will have negative consequences. There’s even a term for extreme overtalking—“talkaholism.”

A talkaholic himself, Lyons chronicles his search to discover why some people are compulsive talkers and his efforts to find a cure. He learns that in 2010 researchers discovered that talkativeness is linked to brain-wave imbalances, which explains why a talkaholic can’t just quit. Determined to be a better spouse, father and friend, Lyons learned from dozens of people, gathering strategies and advice to help him zip his lips.

Even though I’m not a talkaholic, I can learn from Lyons’ efforts to speak with intention. All of us can benefit from talking less and listening more. Lyons describes disciplining himself to slow down when talking, ask open-ended questions and be comfortable with silence. As he changed his communication habits, Lyons’ relationships improved.

A goal of the feature section in this issue is to encourage us to talk. To share our stories of coming to and growing in our faith whether we are tight-lipped or unzipped. In his essay, “Tell your story,” Dave Thiessen reminds us that sharing our testimony is a key way to pass the faith from one generation to another (pp 10-11). Sarah Morgan alerts us to the important role parents play, writing that “parents have the most influence and the greatest opportunity to help build authentic, lifelong faith in their kids” (pp 12-13).

I hope that these feature articles encourage us to be enthusiastic talkers when it comes to intentionally sharing our stories of coming to faith. Our testimonies can introduce others to Jesus and encourage fellow disciples in their walk of faith. Our stories should reflect our weaknesses and failures because none of us are perfect. Our lives are messy; we make mistakes. And God loves us despite our shortcomings.

I also want us to remember to listen. Describing his new strategy for conversations with his children, Lyons writes, “Officially speaking we were ‘having a talk,’ but in truth I was having a listen.” He advocates being an active listener. “Pay fierce attention to the other person,” Lyons says.

When someone listens to our faith story, it opens the door for us to reciprocate by listening to them. Let’s be as deliberate in our listening as we are in our testifying.

Connie Faber,
Editor



“Pay fierce attention to the other person... When someone listens to our faith story, it opens the door for us to reciprocate by listening to them.”

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**Our
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What defines my identity?

Being a child of God should affect our political choice

In recent columns I've written about the influence today of secularism in the American church and that only a small percentage of Christians in America now hold a true biblical worldview. But how should believers who hold a biblical worldview approach politics and the public square?

One negative approach is often called Christian nationalism. In his *Christianity Today* article, "What is Christian Nationalism?" scholar and author Paul D. Miller describes Christian nationalism this way: "Christian nationalism takes the name of Christ for a particular worldly political agenda, proclaiming that its program is the political program for every true believer. That is wrong in principle, no matter what the agenda is, because only the church is authorized to proclaim the name of Jesus and carry his standard into the world."

Christian nationalism is, at the heart, a misunderstanding of the relationship between Christianity and the American nation. It ties Christianity with American greatness and focuses on the idea that our truest identity is based on American patriotism and how that pairs with our belief in God.

Our identity as Christians shouldn't be based on our adhesion or dedication to a political party. Our worldview should be shaped from the Bible, and then we allow that to frame our political views. The word "evangelical" has recently been mixed up with politics. I want to seize back the word evangelical! It means faith, action and mission focused on the good news of salvation brought to sinners by the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.

This view should shape the way we approach politics. With the Bible and the good news as our backdrop, who or what do we support with our political involvement? We must identify what is good and evil in light of who God is and shape our positions on specific issues accordingly. There are issues and times when we should be politically vocal. For instance, abortion, the extinguishing of human life. We draw lines. We support what is good in God's sight and that comes from holding a biblical worldview and not a secular social justice worldview. As followers of Jesus, we can and should be involved politically for critically important issues of morality. At the very minimum we must vote accordingly.

Is our identity based on our political identification? No. Our identity must be based on being a child of God. Our identity is in Jesus. But being a child of God shapes our political awareness and choices. There are big issues that do have biblical clarity and are delineated by particular political platforms and leaders—with positions on concerns such as abortion, parental rights, religious freedom, public education and injustices that should direct how we vote and who we support. Our identity in Jesus drives the way we vote for the common good and aligns with a biblical worldview. We need to be informed so that we can engage with confidence.

Succinctly, our Christian worldview enlightens how we address social issues; social issues do not shape or drive our Christianity. Our connection with Jesus, not a political party, shows us how to respond to issues. We can be thankful that we live in America and for many of the things America provides and stands for. I love America. But I love Jesus far more. As our USMB Confession of Faith states, my primary allegiance is to Christ's kingdom.

Don Morris
don@usmb.org





★ Ferndale,
Washington



Good News Fellowship

Ferndale, Wash. • Established: 1980
Pacific District Conference • Attendance: 85
Lead Pastor: Luke LeViere

Our congregation in three words:
Missional, Compassionate, Steadfast

How can you pray for us?

- Pray for our church, especially our students, to be healthy, godly examples of what it means to live a blessed, joy-filled life with Jesus.
- Pray for families who are experiencing relational brokenness, economic stress and addictions.
- Pray for our staffing positions to be filled with God's chosen candidates.

Connect with us! Facebook: Good News Fellowship

Top left: GNF partnered with other Ferndale churches to host a drive through Bethlehem experience in December. GNF's scene was the angels visiting the shepherds.

Top right: GNF participated in Ferndale's Old Settlers' Parade.

Left middle: GNF's Summer Adventure Camp for children.

Left bottom: When the community experienced a major flood disaster, GNF served as an emergency shelter when hundreds of people were forced to leave their homes. GNF helped with cleanup and preparation for damage assessors.



News in Brief

Compiled by Janae Rempel

Martin to join USMB staff full-time

J.L. Martin, Hesston, Kan., has been hired by USMB to work alongside Donna Sullivan, USMB administrative secretary/bookkeeper/event planner.



Martin has served in a part-time capacity since 2019 as USMB's social media coordinator and will begin working fulltime in September.

"Already having J.L. Martin on the USMB staff, it's an easy decision to

hire him on full-time in an expanded role," says USMB National Director Don Morris. "J.L. is conscientious and an encourager for our staff, and he does timely, excellent work. I look forward to

his full-time staff involvement."

In his new role, Martin will help lessen Sullivan's workload, assisting with USMB bookkeeping, donation flow for several Mennonite Brethren and Anabaptist agencies and event planning for meetings and the upcoming Gathering 2024. He will also continue as USMB's social media coordinator.

Martin has served in ministry for 22 years, most recently at Hesston (Kan.) MB Church as pastor of children and families for 14 years. He earned his bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting from Sterling (Kan.) College and a master's in youth and family ministry from Denver Seminary, where he also served as staff accountant for two years while a student. Martin and his wife, Bethany, have four children.—USMB

CL receives awards

The *Christian Leader* received three awards in the 2023 Evangelical Press Association's Christian journalism competition for work published in 2022. In the Awards of Excellence contest, the magazine received an Award of Merit in the Most Improved category. The magazine received fourth place in Higher Goals: Standing Column for Frontlines, with entries by Stuart Curry ("Detail oriented," Sept/Oct) and Jeremy Jordan ("Untraditional," Nov/Dec). Wendell Loewen received fifth place in Higher Goals: Biblical Exposition for "The Road to Reconciliation" published in the Nov/Dec issue.—CL

ASCENT coming in June

USMB NextGen, formerly USMB Youth, will host its annual national high school summer camp, ASCENT, at Glorieta Adventure Camps in Glorieta, N.M., June 16-20. Jason Quiring, lead pastor at Greenhouse Community Church in Saratoga Springs, Utah, will serve as speaker. Presence Worship will lead worship.

In explaining the camp theme, "Be," the USMB NextGen website notes our culture is obsessed with achievement. "What if the Christian's measure of success has less to do with doing and more to do with being?" organizers say. "Our hope, as followers of Christ, is to be more like Jesus. We were created in God's image, and while sin stained the way that plays itself out in our lives, God is recreating us into the image of Jesus."

Registration after April 30 is \$425 for students and \$250 for leaders. To register for ASCENT, visit www.usmbnextgen.com/ascent.—USMB NextGen



MCC responds to earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye

Mennonite Central Committee is providing emergency assistance after two earthquakes and subsequent aftershocks hit Syria and Türkiye in February causing widespread damage and loss of life. The death toll has surpassed 54,000 people.

Syria was already weakened by almost 12 years of armed conflict that preceded the Feb. 6 and Feb. 20 earthquakes. The fighting, which began March 15, 2011, damaged many buildings, making them vulnerable to shocks from the earthquake. Many families have also been displaced by conflict and are living in unfinished and unsafe buildings that are at higher risk for collapse.

MCC is working with partners in Syria to provide food, hygiene items, diapers, blankets, drinking water and trauma counseling. MCC is also continuing programming in place before the earthquakes to distribute food baskets and provide support for heating needs and is planning a longer-term food response in Aleppo, Latakia and Tartous.

To learn more or to donate, visit <https://donate.mcc.org/cause/syria-earthquake-response>. —MCC



Willow Avenue Mennonite Church membership in PDC, USMB terminated

In a Feb. 13, 2023, email to Pacific District Conference churches, the PDC Executive Board updated the district on the status of Willow Avenue Mennonite Church (WAMC), a congregation in Fresno, Calif., that welcomes and affirms LGBTQ individuals.

The email reports that acting as the “conference in interim,” the PDC Executive Board on Aug. 23, 2022, voted to terminate the membership of WAMC. WAMC held a service Jan. 8, 2023, in which they were officially received by the Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference of Mennonite Church USA. The email states that WAMC continues to utilize its facility.

The PDC suspended WAMC’s membership in October

2021 for considering a proposal to affirm and welcome LGBTQ people, a proposal that is not consistent with the USMB Confession of Faith articles on marriage and discipleship. The congregation adopted the proposal on Jan. 9, 2022.

“We are grieved over what has transpired leading to the loss of a formerly fully participating church,” says the February letter. “The PDC Executive Board is committed to faithfully fulfilling its responsibilities to the PDC. These responsibilities are outlined in our USMB Confession of Faith, USMB and PDC bylaws and prior decisions of the PDC at convention. We also want to assure the PDC that decisions beyond the purview of the PDC Executive Board will be deferred until the 2023 PDC convention.” —PDC

Tabor College reports record retention

Enrollment for the Spring 2023 semester at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., numbers 613 students, including 460 students on the Hillsboro campus, 69 in dual-credit classes, two online undergraduates and 82 in graduate programs. A total of 637 students enrolled for the Fall 2022 semester, compared to 688 in Fall 2021.

The institution reports a record retention rate of 94 percent of undergraduate students returning for the spring semester, besting the previous 92 percent returning for Spring 2021.

"This is a significant accomplishment by the entire campus community for Tabor's growth and sustainability," says President David Janzen. "We have a great culture on campus this year. Our students are engaged and thriving as demonstrated in campus interactions and now also reflected in these outstanding retention numbers." —TC



FPU receives grant to fund new program

A \$1.5 million grant will help fund the creation of a Master of Social Work program at Fresno Pacific University. Candidates with a bachelor's degree in social work can earn a master's degree in one year through an accelerated format offered first on the main campus and later at the North Fresno and Visalia campuses. A traditional two-year pathway is in the planning stages.

Work on the grant began in the fall of 2022, with a proposal to the California Department of Health Care Access & Information (HCAI): Social Work Education Capacity Expansion program. The HCAI grant program serves children and youth through developing and expanding social work education programs that increase the supply of trained behavioral health care staff.

HCAI issued \$59.4 million in Social Work Education Capacity Expansion grants to support social work education at 23 schools on Feb. 1, 2023. With the second-highest application score in its category, FPU was in the top tier of awards among the seven universities starting new MSW programs. —FPU

5 minutes with...

MAE EWERT



You might think the city would run out of ways to honor Mae Ewert of New Life Community in Dinuba, Calif. At 100 years of age, Ewert continues a lifetime of community involvement that earned her Dinuba's Distinguished Citizen Award in 2016, Grand Marshall of the Raisin Day Parade in 2018 and an honorary membership in the Dinuba Kiwanis Club. In 2023 the Chamber of Commerce added "Community Hero" to the list of recognitions, honoring her as "a shining example of what it means to age gracefully and with purpose." Ewert gave up her driver's license a few years ago, and in 2011 she lost Albert, her husband and partner in community ministry. But the losses haven't curbed her passion. Today much of her serving happens from her kitchen table where she sits with stacks of correspondence and boxes of cards and stationery. She laid aside her pen on a recent morning for an interview reflecting on her service.

How did you get started?

It seems like we've always been involved. Albert was a teacher so we met lots of people in the community when we moved here in 1947. He held different offices in the Historical Society and Kiwanis. I liked being with Albert and I liked helping so I always got involved, too.

What are some other community organizations you are involved in?

When our girls were in school, I was in the PTA. Later I joined the Dinuba Woman's Club and helped to start Dinuba Friends of the Library.

What involvement has been most meaningful for you?

Our church has meant a lot to us, and the community service most dear to our hearts was the Sister City Program. Albert was the chair of that group, and we were very involved in the exchange program. I would help round up homes for the

students to stay in. We personally visited our sister city of Malsch, Germany, three times. I'm still in touch with three families there.

Why is your correspondence so important to you?

It just comes natural. I started out pretty young. I have a certificate from second grade for writing the best letter on letter-writing day. I've always made it a point when someone does something special to acknowledge it with a note. Sending notes of encouragement, gratitude and cards for special occasions helps me. It keeps me going. And a lot of times it helps the other person too. The postman says I'm his best customer.

Is there a Scripture that encourages you in your service?

This is the verse I put in my life story journal: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Interview by Kathy Heinrichs Wiest

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Brudergemeinden in Deutschland (AMBD)

German Mennonite Brethren Conference

Germany has three national Mennonite Brethren conferences of which the German MB Conference (AMBD) is one. AMBD conference leader André Pritzkau shares this report.

AMBD was founded in the 1960s, emerging out of the ministry and support of Multiply missionaries after World War 2. The conference understands itself as a family of MB churches in different regions of Germany. Our vision is to plant new churches, grow healthy churches and stay connected as an MB family and beyond. As we make the gospel known, we want to live as peacemakers and serve in the ministry of reconciliation in our communities and in our country with its long history of division.

In March, we welcomed into the AMBD family a new church plant in the city of Hameln and another established church in the city of Ummeln. We now consist of 14 churches with about 1,600 members. On the other hand, we also had to come to terms with one of our churches in Bielefeld closing. The few remaining families joined other MB churches in the area.

One of the highlights of answered prayer is to see over a dozen new young leaders step up in our churches



AMBD leaders gathered in March.

and in the AMBD ready to take up responsibility, cast a vision for tomorrow and look for ways to put that vision into action.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Pray with us for this coming November** as we plan a vision weekend with the young generation of leaders.
- **May God give faith to dream big** as we follow our calling of making disciples and planting new churches.
- **May God give hearts that surrender to him**, leaders that love the church and churches that reach the lost.

Did You Know?

- There are more than 1,000 kinds of sausage and 3,000 varieties of bread in Germany.

- 65 percent of highways, known as Autobahn, have no mandated speed limit.

- There are more than 20,000 castles in Germany, most at least 100 years old.

Tell your story

Why it is important to share our testimonies of conversion

By Dave Thiessen

It's been reported that 75 percent of people fear public speaking more than death. I probably believed that the day I shared my testimony in my high school English class. I felt prompted by God to share my conversion story as my public speaking assignment and happily saw it bear fruit in the conversion of one of my classmates later that school year.

Conversion testimonies have long been a uniquely influential source of knowledge regarding salvation for evangelical Christians. Christian testimony has also been a keyway for the faith to be transmitted from one generation to the next. It simplifies through storytelling an experience—being born again—that is otherwise difficult to explain. Furthermore, it encourages believers in their faith, hearing about how God is at work saving people. It has also long been a staple of baptism and membership practices among the Mennonite Brethren, allowing the church to authenticate the faith of baptismal candidates and prospective members.

The modern history of conversion testimony begins with Augustine's *Confessions*. Written in the late fourth century, it has been the benchmark for all other conversion accounts in Christian history, surpassed in importance only by the conversion of the apostle Paul. His famous account of hearing a voice say, "Take it and read it. Take it and read it," leading to his spiritual rebirth, has influenced all subsequent biographical accounts.

Conversion testimony was a common feature of early Anabaptist writings, illustrated most effectively by the conversion story of Menno Simons. Coming to the personal conviction

regarding the error of the doctrine of transubstantiation and the practice of infant baptism years earlier, Menno was living a hypocritical life—discharging his duties as a Catholic priest in the village of Witmarsum while lacking real faith. He was finally moved to action when authorities killed 300 zealous but deceived members of a sect known as Munsterites.

Realizing his failure to speak the truth and effectively shepherd sheep in his community, Menno describes his encounter with God as follows: "My heart trembled within me. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that he would give to me, a sorrowing sinner, the gift of his grace, create within me a clean heart and graciously through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ forgive my unclean walk and frivolous easy life."

The ongoing interest in conversion among the Anabaptists is clear from the focus it is given in the 1,157-page *Martyr's Mirror*, which records the accounts of more than 4,000 martyred Anabaptists from the 16th century and often includes their conversion experience. While these conversion accounts are typically brief, they reinforce for Anabaptists the priority of publicly attesting to being born again and adhering to the true church as a part of faithful Christian witness.

Spoken and written conversion testimonies continue to be a primary method of outreach among evangelicals today. These more recent conversion accounts are too numerous to count, but there are some that stand out for their unique and enduring contribution to the evangelical understanding of conversion.

One such example is Chuck Colson's autobiography, *Born Again*.

Colson describes a visit with a friend in the middle of the Watergate scandal that would send Colson to prison. During that visit his friend describes his own conversion at a Billy Graham Madison Square Garden crusade in New York and gives Colson a copy of *Mere Christianity*.

Colson reads it during the following week of vacation and comes to realize his need for Christ: "And so early that Friday morning, while I sat alone staring at the sea I love, words I had not been certain I could understand or say fell naturally from my lips: 'Lord Jesus, I believe in you. I accept you. Please come into my life. I commit it to You.' With these few words . . . came a sureness of mind that matched the depth of feeling in my heart. There came something more—strength and serenity, a wonderful new assurance about life, a fresh perception of myself and the world around me."

Colson's new faith was immediately tested as he went to prison for his role in Watergate. Upon his release he continued to testify boldly for Christ and founded Prison Fellowship, a ministry with global reach.

Utilizing conversion testimony today can continue to bless the church in a number of ways. First, conversion testimony gives glory to God and inspires worship. Every time I hear someone share their testimony during a baptism service or in a small group, I am amazed at how God faithfully draws people to himself. Each story shows the love and patience and mercy of God from a slightly different perspective and adds to our appreciation of God's greatness.

Second, a well-prepared testimony preaches the gospel to all who listen. It is a witness of the good news in action, bringing change to people's lives. This is why at Mountain View Church we encourage those being baptized to invite all their friends and families to come support them, even providing them with "I'm getting baptized!" invitation cards.

Third, the faith of believers who hear the testimony is strengthened. We all need to be reminded that the good news about Jesus Christ is, "the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). Hearing how God's power is at work in people's lives today is vital to that strengthening.

Sharing my testimony in school all those years ago gave me new courage to share my faith with classmates, and it solidified my self-under-

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standing as a set apart, follower of Jesus. Most importantly, it paved the way for an opportunity later that year to lead one of my school friends to faith in Jesus. These are just some of the many blessings that can come from public testimony. Here, then, are a few ways to encourage the continued use of conversion testimony today.

We can encourage people in our churches to know and share their own stories. To facilitate this, at Mountain View we use a simple, three-point outline for preparing baptism testimonies—my life before I met Christ, how I met Christ (why, what, when, where, how, with whom) and how my life has changed since I met Christ. We teach this outline to the whole church in various settings, encouraging people to write out a two-minute testimony.

We encourage our small groups that meet during the week for Bible study and prayer to make sharing testimonies a part of their worship. I've been blessed time and time again to hear how people come to faith in Christ, sometimes spectacularly, but more often by ordinary means – at their grandparents' knee, at vacation Bible school, at summer camp.

Churches can continue (or start) the practice of including public conversion testimony as a part of water baptism. For the reasons already stated above, the individual sharing will be strengthened, the church will be blessed and our Lord Jesus Christ will be glorified.

Finally, let me encourage you to read Christian biography. I know you're a reader; you made it to the end of this article, didn't you? So, grab a classic book of Christian biography and read it. Start with one of the titles I have mentioned here or one that has been gathering dust on your shelf. You will be blessed.

Dave Thiessen is the executive pastor at Mountain View Church, Fresno, Calif. He is a graduate of MB Biblical Seminary and the University of British Columbia. He and his wife, Connie, have three children.

DEEP and WIDE

By Sarah Morgan

Four strategies for helping children develop lifelong faith

Barna Group estimates that about 70 percent of students entering college as Christians will leave with little to no faith. I don't know about you, but that stirs a desire in me to help my kids develop a deep faith now that they won't be likely to abandon when they leave home. The big question is "How?"

Attending church with our kids just isn't enough, although it's an important step. Check out these numbers. Kids spend well over 1,000 hours at school each year. That's a lot of influence. Kids spend about 40 hours per year at church. That's such a short time in comparison. But parents get a whopping 3,000 hours of influence per year with their kids. The numbers speak for themselves. Parents have the most influence and the greatest opportunity to help build authentic, lifelong faith in their kids.

God tasks parents with the responsibility of teaching their children about Jesus and building their faith. The commands in Deuteronomy 6:5-9 were originally given to the Israelites, but I believe they apply to us in 2023 as well. These verses make it clear that spiritual conversations with family are meant to be a significant part of our lives. You don't have to be a pastor or have gone to Bible college to disciple your kids at home. A few simple strategies and habits can make all the difference.

Strategy 1: Attend to your own faith

"And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you

must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today" (Deut. 6:5-6).

My dad took me to church Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night when I was growing up. I was absolutely immersed in church. What made even more of an impact on my faith was my dad's personal walk with Jesus. My dad was an early riser. He would usually be at work by the time I woke up. One of the things I noticed each morning was his open Bible sitting on the dining room table. He had clearly spent time with God that morning. Seeing how important it was to my dad to sit with Jesus helped me see my own need for time in God's Word.

What does it look like to inspire your children toward Jesus by attending to your own faith? Take them into "big" church with you occasionally to let them see you worship. Serve at your church and let your kids be involved, if appropriate. Spend some of your time with God while your kids are awake and home, when they can see you opening your Bible.

The expression, "More is caught than taught," rings true. If you attend to your own faith, making disciples of your children will be a natural overflow of the disciple you are becoming.

Strategy 2: Schedule the spiritual

God intends us to make faith a big deal in our lives and with our families. "Repeat them (God's commands) again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the

"Parents have the most influence and the greatest opportunity



E road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut. 6:7-9).

Sometimes we must schedule important things to make them happen. You aren't going to randomly show up at the dentist because it's convenient. You schedule and plan and make sure to floss for a few nights before the appointment. The same concept can be applied to having

spiritual conversations.

Make a list of spiritual conversations you'd like to have with your kids. I keep a running list on my phone in the notes app, where my husband and I can both add ideas. When I think of something I want to talk about with my kids, I add it to the list. Then I take one item on the list and plan the opportunity to talk about it. Make it a habit, and it will be easier to get momentum.

The best way to create new habits is to connect them to existing habits. Deuteronomy 6 tells us to talk with our children when we are going to bed. If you tuck your kids in every night, this is the perfect time to add a habit of praying together or reading a devotional together. *Grace for the Moment Family Devotional* by Max Lucado is a great place to start with young kids.

Try listening to worship music in the morning. Ask everyone at dinner about their "high" (best moment) and "low" (worst moment) of the day. Parent Cue (theparentcue.org) has weekly "cues" to help you make the most of the moments you already have together. Family Time Training (famtime.com) has great simple tools that you can just open and start the conversation. What gets scheduled gets done. Be intentional, and you'll see it pay off.

You don't have to try all these strategies. Pick what resonates with you. You don't have to do everything, just the next thing.

Strategy 3: Make the most of the moments

So much of faith-building will happen in random, everyday experiences. When your kid comes home from school with a story about a bully, listen and empathize. Then ask, "Should we see what God's Word has to say about this?" It's easy to search online for "Verses about ____." Maybe you'll read Matthew 5, where Jesus preaches about loving your enemies.

When your son mentions that he heard the neighbors are getting a divorce, that's a great opportunity to talk about God's design for marriage. Follow up by brainstorming ideas for how you can show love to those neighbors while they are going through a hard time. When kids see how God's Word is relevant to their everyday lives, they will be more likely to continue to look to God for answers to life's situations.

Bonus strategy: Cultivate the connection

Cultivating a strong connection with your kids in the everyday will open doors to all sorts of conversations and opportunities. When your kids talk, stop what you are doing and listen. Avoid giving advice every time. Say "yes" to their requests as often as you can. Write them notes about positive qualities you see in them. All of this will create a strong connection between you and your kids. This strong, positive connection will pave the way for faith conversations your kids will listen to.

I wish I could promise that doing these things will guarantee that our children will grow up to love and follow Jesus. We may do everything "right," and our children may still end up choosing a path separate from Jesus. After all, faith in Jesus is a personal decision.

But don't you want to know that you did all you could? If discipling your kids sounds overwhelming, start small and keep it simple. Pick up a devotional on Amazon or investigate the websites mentioned in this article. You'll never regret the time you spend growing your kids' faith and knowledge of Jesus.

Sarah Morgan is the elementary ministry director at Mosaic: A Jesus Centered Community, located in Denver, Colo.

to help build authentic, lifelong faith in their kids."

Joining God at work

What discipleship means for one church plant

By Michele Fiester

On one side of Renewal MB Church, a four-year-old church plant in north Rapid City, S.D., is I-90, an interstate that can take you anywhere you want to go. On the other side are three multiunit low income housing complexes. These apartments are filled with hundreds of people who are trapped, battling a spiritual darkness unlike anywhere else in Rapid City.

When we relocated our church plant to this former Chuck E. Cheese restaurant in 2021, we didn't fully understand how many lives this specific location would lead us to impact. This neighborhood is often in the news and not for the right reasons. But it wasn't until we moved in that we realized the extent of the brokenness and need for the gospel.

While many great families live here, there are others tied to gangs and drug trafficking. This holds people hostage in their own homes and often manifests in hopelessness and violence. Every week we hear of another soul lost to violence, suicide or overdose. Only Jesus can provide true healing, so we pray for God to open doors and create relationships in these housing units, and he certainly is!

God opening doors

From property managers and neighbors to city and community leaders, people interact with us in many ways inside and outside of our church building. Because of trauma and outsiders coming in to "fix" them, our neighbors are naturally

skeptical. To build relationships, we hold events like family movie nights, block parties, vacation Bible school, Trunk or Treat, back to school supply drives, community service projects and neighborhood holiday meals.

These events allow parents to begin trusting us enough to let their kids come to our weekly gatherings. The kids often come alone for several months. Over time, the parents make their way across the street and begin conversations with us. This evolves into their coming to hear about Jesus and the power he has to bring healing and freedom to live in a new way. It has taken nearly two years for this to begin to happen, but we are seeing it, and it is exciting.

We have many neighbors with strong spiritual beliefs tied to their cultural background. They don't have much interest in Jesus. With all the brokenness related to addiction and gang violence, people recognize something drastically needs to change. They try everything: social reform, increased police presence, spiritual rituals, working harder and neighborhood parties to increase community relationships. Almost everything except Jesus. This is where Renewal steps in.

God is already at work

We have spent a great deal of time asking God to reveal to us where he is at work. James 1:5-6 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind."

Too many times we go into ministry with our own wisdom for how to "fix" people. The results are best described as "blown and tossed by the wind," completely ineffective. I have learned it is more effective to ask God where he is working and to reveal to me

how I can join him there. That is what we do at Renewal.

As we come alongside where God reveals himself to be at work, we offer support and encouragement. We begin conversations about a lasting change that can come through the incredible power of the gospel of Jesus that restores us to a right relationship with our Creator. A right relationship enables redemption, freedom and healing from the spiritual darkness holding them in captivity. Once these conversations begin, we can walk with them in discipleship.

Discipleship takes effort

As we go through life with those in relationship with Jesus, we help direct and equip them to love what Jesus loves. Discipleship focuses on spiritual growth and looking for fruit in one another's lives. The goal is to make disciples who make disciples themselves.

When people say to me, "I want to know what you know," I say it takes spending time with God, reading his Word, reflecting and recording what you read and how God tells you to apply that to your life. Often they respond, "Can't you just tell me? I don't have time for all of that." They often seem frustrated that learning about Jesus and having a life full of his goodness takes time, energy and commitment. Jesus makes it clear that there are no shortcuts when he instructs us to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23).

When people come to me with problems, I say, "Let's pray and I will lead you in asking Jesus about what he wants you to know." It surprises me how many people don't have this desire. They want another person to just give them the answer, often one they already think they know. But this shortcut is not being a disciple of Jesus as it encourages looking for answers apart from God.

Jesus models seeking answers from Father God. Luke 5:16 says, "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Jesus knows the Scriptures and spends time reading, praying and listening. In Luke 4:1-13, every temptation the devil brings before Jesus, he answers with Scripture. Developing this habit is the foundation of discipleship.

Being part of a church plant doesn't change these principles. It does mean we are extra cautious of past wounds, being full of grace and contextualizing

the language we use. We must be aware that we may trigger memories of previous trauma and erect unnecessary walls. So, we start with how we live outside the church building. We ask God if our behaviors are consistent, both within the church walls and outside of them. Then we strive to listen for and respond to his response.

Modeling to equipping

We have to publicly model these spiritual disciplines before people are interested in talking about them. As people see we are grounded in the foundation of Jesus and not swayed by emotions, situations or struggles, they begin to wonder what is different. They desire change and they want help but have to overcome fear and pain to get there. It is with the grace and love of Jesus that we can come alongside them and help them seek more of him through reading the Bible and praying.

“

Every week we hear of another soul lost to violence, suicide or overdose. Only Jesus can provide true healing, so we pray for God to open doors and create relationships in these housing units, and he certainly is!

”

Once they see Jesus' presence and begin their relationship with him, we encourage them to ask God where he is at work and what he needs to change within them to help them grow closer to him through the power of the Holy Spirit, and follow his lead.

It usually isn't where we would expect God to start working within them. But he is God, and we are not. So, we join them in whatever area of work the Holy Spirit reveals, equipping them with Scripture reading plans and resources helpful for them to

It is with the grace and love of Jesus that we can come alongside them and help them seek more of him through reading the Bible and praying.

practically take the next step in their journey with Jesus. We meet individually or in small groups and discuss what we each are learning in Scripture. God is so faithful, and he does the work leading us through repentance, humility and faithfulness. As individuals begin to change, communities begin to change, and the outside world takes notice.

"How are we making an impact?"
"How are we as a church able to integrate multiple ethnicities and cultures while maintaining unity in our work?"
The watching world asks these questions, hoping to model and duplicate in their own secular organizations whatever we identify as our "secret sauce." We tell them the answer is the gospel of Jesus, and it isn't possible for healing, transformation and unity outside of our relationship with him. But through Jesus, everyone is important and miraculous transformation is possible.

As people have come through the doors of Renewal and are challenged to start this journey, we have seen them move from skeptical of anything about Jesus, to curious about what he is doing and then finally deciding Jesus is their only hope for redemption and the life they want to live. They can do more than just survive life; they can have life abundantly. While the process never flows smoothly without setbacks, God faithfully continues calling people to himself.

Michele Fiester is the prayer ministry pastor at Renewal MB Church, a USMB church plant in Rapid City, S.D. Fiester, a registered nurse, and her husband, Jon, planted Renewal in 2018. They have two daughters.

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But is there a better question to ask as followers of Jesus?

From head to heart

God has done so much for me

My spiritual journey has been an interesting one with many chapters. I grew up Catholic and attended catechism twice a week. My hands got slapped with a ruler a few times, and one of the things that harmed me most in that era was being told not to like what I saw when I looked in the mirror. I'm not sure what motivated that. I tried to be a good girl and played the organ at church.

The next chapter of my spiritual journey began after my brother committed suicide. A friend gave us a picture with the "Footprints in the Sand" poem on it. I remember sitting and reading it—surrounded by many people but in a world of my own—wondering what this God was all about. In times of trouble, Jesus walked alongside me, guiding me, but I was only halfway listening. I didn't know how to do the job he had created for me to do here on earth.

Many years went by with God experiences, but I still wasn't tapping into all his glory. Then I went to treatment for drugs and alcohol. Alcoholics Anonymous is a spiritually based program, and I learned to trust a Higher Power.

After working on that for a while, I still felt like I was missing something—maybe how to listen to God and to truly learn his purpose for me.

When my father passed away a few years ago, I isolated myself for too long! I missed my dad so much and did not know how to live life without him. I knew I needed to do something but was not extremely motivated.

Then, I accepted an invitation to Redemption Church. From my very first visit, I knew the church had something for me. Learning about Jesus and who he is and what he did for me on that cross just blew my mind. The love in his heart must be amazing. One Sunday, as Pastor Christian (Kohs) preached, I realized that I have a new Father who has done so much for me, and I am amazed. God the Father is my new Dad. It feels so good, and I trust it 100 percent.

I am so grateful that I get to live like this with the Lord. My knowledge and love for God has moved from my head to my heart, and I am excited for what God has in store for me. I can see and feel him strengthening me in so many ways. I am grateful for the amazing peace he has given me. I really enjoy how Redemption Church is teaching me to read and understand the Bible. My church family is so important to me. It is about love and commitment to Jesus.

Pastor Christian has taught me to trust, believe and act on my own life here on earth. I have found so many opportunities to

grow and teach others how wonderful life can be when you believe and trust in God. His life plans always amaze me, and it is so fun to follow his direction because it seems to work!

My church family is so important to me. It is about love and commitment to Jesus.



Stephanie McCarren attends Redemption Church in Owatonna, Minn. She has two adult children and three grandchildren. The most important things in her life are her family, her church community and AA. She is excited to bring the AA program into a local women's prison. Stephanie enjoys quilting, riding bike and walking her dog, Rosie.

Super power

Only the Holy Spirit can accomplish God's mission

There is no substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When his power is present there is no difficulty we cannot face, no sin too big to overcome, no task too difficult to achieve. And the Holy Spirit is what the holiday of Pentecost is all about. But I fear that in some churches' self-sufficient rush for more, bigger, fancier and more entertaining, Pentecost and what it represents has become a forgotten, or at least a neglected, holiday.

Not that simply observing Pentecost or even studying this event guarantees the Holy Spirit's power, but perhaps it could be a start. This year Pentecost drops on May 28, but it was celebrated by the Jews long before the events recorded in Acts 2. Pentecost was the middle of three annual harvest festivals celebrating God's provision. The word "Pentecost" means 50, and it was the culmination of the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22, Deut. 16:10). Historically, shortly before the time of Jesus, Pentecost was observed as the anniversary of the giving of the Jewish law through Moses.

Interesting that God chooses Pentecost as the day on which he sends the Holy Spirit to indwell

believers (Acts 2:1-4). Next, we read that, "God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven" hear the gospel preached in their own language (Acts 2:5-12). Then, the Apostle Peter preaches a profoundly powerful evangelistic message. And "those who accepted his message and were baptized, numbered about three thousand" (Acts 2:13-41). Those are the kind of results that only the power of the Holy Spirit can produce. How often do we settle for less?

There is much more to say about Pentecost, but let me mention two implications. First, the Spirit is given to unify the church. Remember, the crowd that gathers on Pentecost is racially and nationally mixed. I'm reminded that at Babel (Genesis 11), God confuses the languages and scatters the nations. At Babel the nations pridefully try to ascend to heaven. At Pentecost God overcomes the language barrier, humbly descends to indwell people and bring the nations together. Pentecost represents a new unity in Christ, a unity that can overcome any and every social barrier.

Second, the Spirit is given to empower our witness. Prior to Pentecost, the disciples are a frightened band who feel far more secure behind closed doors. After Pentecost they practically explode out of the room to tell others about Jesus. That's what the filling of the Holy Spirit does, and the results speak for themselves.

It makes me wonder, if we were weaker, perhaps we would experience more of God's

power. If we were less self-sufficient and more dependent on the Spirit, perhaps we would see more of the miraculous. I guess, in the end, I'm not so concerned that we will forget Pentecost as a holiday. What concerns me is the possibility that Christ-followers and churches will forget that only the Spirit of God can accomplish the mission of God. That's what Pentecost tells us. My prayer is that May 28 will remind us that in the end it is "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).

If we were less self-sufficient and more dependent on the Spirit, perhaps we would see more of the miraculous.



Mike Andrews is pastor of Gospel Fellowship Church in Wolf Point, Mont.

USMB staff is serving well

Introducing seven USMB staff members

"As I travel around our five districts, hold Zoom calls with leaders or talk on the phone with pastors, I'm often surprised by how little some people know about the staff that serves our USMB family so well," says USMB national director Don Morris. "I want to make sure we all know who they are and what they do."

Donna Sullivan, Wichita, Kan., has served USMB since 1990 as administrative secretary/bookkeeper. She also works with event planning, including the biennial USMB Gathering.

"Donna likely knows more about USMB matters than just about anyone else on the planet," Morris says.

Sullivan and her husband, Tim, the Southern District Conference district minister, are often on the road on weekends visiting SDC churches or keeping track of their three grown children and eight grandchildren.

Connie Faber, Hillsboro, Kan., has served as the *Christian Leader* editor since 2004 and worked for the magazine 10 years prior to that. She also helps produce C-Link, an online news digest, and chairs the CL Editorial Committee. She and her husband, Dave, have three adult children and one grandchild. Faber has led the magazine to several Evangelical Press Association awards, including a "best-in-class" first-place honor in 2022.

Janae Rempel, Hillsboro, Kan., joined the USMB staff as *Christian Leader* assistant editor in

2017 and transitioned to associate editor in January 2020. Rempel is known for her excellent writing and interviewing skills. She's also an experienced photographer. In July 2020, Rempel began serving as the USMB administrative assistant which encompasses about half of her overall work hours. She enjoys sports and a good cup of coffee.

Lori Taylor, Bakersfield, Calif., served as the USMB administrative assistant from 2008-2020. Now she serves about five hours a week as the USMB webmaster, updating the site and providing creative input. She and her husband, Geoff, have four married children and four granddaughters. Always an encourager, Taylor loves connecting with and encouraging other women, especially young moms.

Brian Harris, Owasso, Okla., is the USMB church planting mobilizer, leading the charge for a na-

He and his wife, Stephanie, have two grown daughters.

J.L. Martin, Hesston, Kan., currently serves five hours per week creating social media posts and helping to facilitate the LEAD Pods podcast. In September 2023, Martin will become a full-time USMB employee, working alongside Sullivan in bookkeeping and event planning as well as continuing social media work. He and his wife, Bethany, have four children.

Henri Ngolo, Hamilton, Ohio, joined the USMB staff part-time as integrated immigrant coordinator in November 2022. In this role, he connects with Congolese pastors and churches that have joined USMB or are exploring the possibility. He also collaborates with district leaders for integration opportunities. Ngolo and his wife, Bienvenue, have three children and attend Christian Center the Hand of God in Hamilton,

**These people enthusiastically serve our
USMB family...let them know how
much you appreciate them.**

tional vision for church planting and renewal. Harris planted a church in suburban Cleveland, Ohio, in the early 2000s. He joined the USMB staff in mid-2022. He chairs the Church Planting Council and envisions many regional networks of MB churches joining together as clusters to plant more MB churches.

Ohio, a new USMB church. Ngolo also has ministry endeavors in DR Congo, including Kid's Village for orphans.

"These people enthusiastically serve our USMB family," Morris says. "Let them know how much you appreciate them. I sure do!"
—USMB news story

Ridgepoint Church gives birth at age 80

Church launches on Easter Sunday to be for South Wichita and sent to the world

In March 1943, 19 charter members organized First MB Church—now Ridgepoint Church—in Wichita, Kan. Today, the 1,000-member congregation is birthing a church plant, SouthLife Church, in South Wichita.

“Very few churches beyond 15- or 20-years old plant a campus or launch a church out of the mother-ship,” says Ridgepoint Lead Pastor Brent Warkentin. “It’s kind of like you shouldn’t give birth as an 80-year-old. It’s clear that God has chosen to open our hearts to this.”

Assembling the pieces

Ridgepoint’s church planting history spans decades and is not without setbacks. The congregation planted East Wichita MB Fellowship in 1984, but the church dissolved in 1995. Twelve years ago, a vote to hire a church planter failed to pass, though timing, not the idea of church planting, caused the reluctance, Warkentin says.

A big piece of the planting puzzle came together when, in 2018, a struggling church gave its building to Ridgepoint. The building occupies a corner lot in South Wichita about six miles south of Kellogg Avenue which splits the city in two. According to Ridgepoint’s church plant prospectus, the South Wichita zip code has 22 churches but three times as many people as in Ridgepoint’s 21-church zip code.

It’s a place church planter Kevin Friedberg knows well.

“It’s not a place I was proud of,” says Friedberg, who grew up in South Wichita. “In (SouthLife’s) neighborhood there’s probably a little more pride. But generally, it’s an



Kevin Friedberg speaks during SouthLife’s dedication service April 12, attended by 135 people. SouthLife officially launched on Easter Sunday.

Photo by South Life.

outcast place (in Wichita). ‘I don’t want to go south of Kellogg’ is the mentality. When I moved out it’s like, ‘Bye South Wichita, see you never.’”

Friedberg’s conversations with Ridgepoint leaders predated the gifting of the building. As Friedberg wrestled with his call to return to South Wichita, in Thailand, Andy Owen was also discerning next steps.

“God sent us to Thailand for 20 years, and there was a real call for us to come back to the U.S. to try to raise up and equip leaders here to

reach their own people,” Owen says. “The U.S. is still the number one missionary sending country in the world. So to reach the world, we need our church here in the U.S. to grow as well.”

In January 2022, four years after receiving the building, Ridgepoint hired Owen, a former Multiply missionary, as pastor of equipping and multiplication to spearhead church planting efforts.

Owen gathered a New Day Prayer Team to meet monthly to discern direction for the facility.

In June 2022, Friedberg began a part-time, church planting residency. He holds a master's degree in theological studies, and he and his wife, Kendra, have moved with their two children to South Wichita. Friedberg intends to work part-time at Koch Industries while serving at SouthLife.

"There were a lot of times where I didn't think this was going to happen, and where I wanted to run from God or give up," he says. "But if God wants to build his church, the gates of hell will not prevail."

Launching a church

Friedberg's hire as part-time pastor and church planter set in motion a multi-phase process. With Owen providing support and strategic planning, a core team of 30 to 35 people, some from Ridgepoint, began meeting for meals, worship, prayer, teaching and testimonies, first on Wednesday evenings then moving to Sunday evenings.

Phases have included leadership discernment, budgeting, developing a fundraising plan and launch strategy and community outreach. The group participated in prayer walks and distributed flyers prior to SouthLife's Sunday morning soft launch March 19. The church officially launched Easter Sunday, April 9.

SouthLife is functioning as a hybrid campus/church plant, Owen says, with the goal to be a stand-alone church and off subsidy by 2026. Owen will eventually work himself out of his role and look to start other plants.

A place to receive life

SouthLife is focusing on ministry for kids and young families. South Wichita has one of the lowest median ages in Sedgwick County, and the divorce rate is in the top 10 percent nationwide.

"There's a lot of divorce and broken-

ness," Friedberg says. "What comes with that—(this) is part of my story, too—is uncertainty and lack of rhythm."

SouthLife is hiring a half-time family ministries director and hopes to launch a kids' reading program and partner with Multiply to host a summer sports camp. Community outreach has included a family festival, a Trunk or Treat and an ongoing quarterly pet food giveaway.

SouthLife's slogan is to be for South Wichita and sent to the world.

"We believe there are people right here in South Wichita that are going to help the world know who king Jesus is," Friedberg says. "Our heart is to see people receive life and then to go out."

For Ridgepoint, the timing for multiplication is right.

"Why did God not bring the puzzle pieces together until a year and three months ago or whatever it's been?" Warkentin says. "I don't know, but he's a whole lot smarter than I am. In his wisdom, (God) chose to anoint Andy and Kevin at this time, in this place, to pull this off."

—Janae Rempel



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Ties to the family run deep

Ngolo joins USMB staff in integrated immigrant ministries

As a third generation Mennonite Brethren, Henri Ngolo's ties to the family run deep. Like his grandparents before him, who planted Mennonite Brethren churches in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ngolo has welcomed opportunities to serve his family of faith.

Ngolo is USMB's new integrated immigrant coordinator, adding another layer to his ministry story, which includes serving the MB church in Kinshasa, working in Rwandan refugee camps and aiding immigrant churches in the United States.

"This job for me is not a job," Ngolo says. "It's being a part of your family, a part of what God is doing."

A heart for immigrants

The youngest of nine, Ngolo grew up in Kinshasa, Zaire, in present-day DRC where today, unemployment tops 95 percent. As a child, Ngolo raised chickens and goats to fund his schooling. He sometimes relied on bread and Coca-Cola for sustenance and went to bed hungry.

Ngolo began serving the MB church at a young age, first as choir director, then as youth minister.

Ngolo earned his master's degree in missiology at the University Center in DRC-Kinshasa. While studying God's call of Abraham for his thesis, in July 1994 Ngolo sensed God calling him to aid Mennonite Central Committee's response to the refugee crisis in eastern Congo following the Rwandan genocide.

"I obeyed by faith, and God opened the doors when I did," Ngolo says. "Since then, my life has changed."

The experience gave Ngolo a heart to serve immigrants and refugees affected by war. He also planted an MB church in eastern Congo.

Ngolo came to the U.S. through an MCC exchange program. He continued his studies—and learned English—at Bluffton College, then pursued an associate degree in business management at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland. He also married his wife, Bienvenue. The couple has three children.

Ngolo advanced from stocking shelves to supervising at Sam's Club. He moved to Dayton in 2014 to open a Costco Wholesale, where he works as marketing director.

"This is where the Lord wanted me to come to start the ministries," Ngolo says.

A new mission field

Ngolo's ministry in the U.S. began when he could not find a Mennonite Brethren church to attend.

"I was kneeling and praying about it until the Lord said, 'Look around,'" he says. "I thought I left the immigrants in the Congo. (The Lord) put the same passion in me again. A lot of churches were getting planted by immigrants. He said, 'Here is the field.'"

A resurgence of violence in DRC has internally displaced six million Congolese, and others are fleeing to surrounding countries or coming to the U.S. Ohio is a popular destination for immigrants, Ngolo says, because the cost of living is low, and factories provide accessible jobs. According to the DHS Office of Immigration Statistics, refugees from DRC



Henri Ngolo, integrated immigrant coordinator, speaks during the Congolese Gathering that followed USMB Gathering 2022. Photo by Janae Rempel

comprised 43 percent (4,876 refugees) of refugees admitted to the U.S. in 2021.

Ngolo began connecting with independent immigrant pastors, explaining Mennonite Brethren faith and practice and helping organize MB churches. In DRC, Ngolo had worked with MB leaders, and these individuals connected him with U.S. Mennonite Brethren.

"We're going to be reaching 7,000 immigrants that are freely walking our way," Ngolo says. "Migration is great. I said, 'Family, wake up. We have a new mission field.'"

All in the family

USMB has hired Ngolo to build on his work the past five years serving immigrant congregations.

"With 10 new Congolese MB member churches and many more that are showing interest in becoming a part of our USMB family, we have a huge need for someone knowledgeable about specific Congolese immigrant issues, expertise in dealing with immigrant churches and having the necessary language/communication skills to assist us in this ministry," says USMB national director Don Morris.

According to Terry Hunt, EDC minister and chair of the Integrated Immigrant Council, Ngolo is a good fit for the job.

"Henri is a great communicator, and his 25-plus years living in the U.S. enables him to use his experiences here and in Congo to be the perfect fit for Integrated Immigrant Ministries," Hunt says. "In addition, he can speak three or more languages and understands both cultures well."

Ngolo provides resources to help Congolese leaders understand U.S. culture, legal requirements, budgeting and education with the goal of helping immigrant churches join USMB and become self-sustainable. It takes five to 10 years for immigrants to assimilate, he says.

"Immigrant churches are not a burden," Ngolo says. "Those churches are going to become so productive they will engage in the church planting and evangelizing America in the years to come."

Ngolo works 15 to 20 hours per week with USMB, sometimes more,

while continuing part-time at Costco.

"One of the things I've learned in this journey (is) with us or without us, God will do what God will do because he's God," Ngolo says. "We can't correct him. So, me coming to (the) USMB family to work and to participate, it's (about) being in the family so we can accomplish what God is doing now." —Janae Rempel

To hear an interview with Henri Ngolo, listen to LEAD Pod Episode 70. <https://www.buzzsprout.com/972541/12116895>



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Backyard or beyond

Multiply's new, revamped short-term programs equip for local, global service

"Together that the world may know." For Multiply, the global mission agency for North American Mennonite Brethren, this is a focus, not just a tagline.

In 2019, Multiply announced two shifts in its strategy—releasing the multid denominational aspect of its North American church planting program formerly known as C2C and restructuring its short-term mission programs.

Over the past four years, Multiply has seen changes in short-term mission staffing and short-term training programs and increased its partnership with MB churches in North America in order to unify its ministry, effectively use resources and train workers. In September 2022, Multiply welcomed the first participants in two mission preparation pathways: the FOCUS Internship, a new, nine-month program, and TREK, a long-standing, eight-month Multiply program that has been retooled.

The emphasis in short-term missions on training and preparation prompted a change in the program name, says Mission Mobilizer Heidi Quiring. What was formerly known as the Short-Term Missions Program is now the Mission Training Program, focusing on training rather than the travel experience.

"Training programs are more about calling people, developing them and equipping them to serve wherever God is calling them whether that be locally, nationally or globally," Quiring says. "We don't want to make it only an amazing experience for those in our programs, but we really value training and we

thought that needed to be reflected in how we did our programs. Before, we focused more globally, but really if we're not doing missions in a local or national way, why would we jump globally? Our own backyard is a great place to make disciples and gain experience before jumping right into the global aspect and so we've focused on making disciples everywhere you are."

FOCUS Internships was formed with this purpose and stewardship in mind to help people explore their giftings and discern God's mission

invitation on a journey toward long-term ministry. Interns train at one location in the U.S. or Canada before going to a North American or international location, rather than going directly overseas or to multiple locations, which has improved training and costs.

Carol Letkeman, director of mission training programs, says FOCUS Internships give interns a place to practice outreach while being able to ask questions before going on the global mission field to serve alongside a missionary.



Logan Steventon, second from left, of Wichita, Kan., and Kailee Thiessen, Steinbach, Manitoba, pictured at Mae Sot with Myanmar church leaders Pastor Janu and Lily, are among the first FOCUS Internship participants. *Photo by Multiply*

"In this program they're really practicing, how do we actually reach out to someone we haven't been in a relationship with before? How do we reach out to people while we're doing training?" Letkeman says. "That really brought the training alive for people to learn how to share the gospel in a way that is not just textbook but is relational and real."

TREK, a global training program, has seen changes. Formerly, the U.S. and Canada would both train and send TREK teams to different global locations, but Quiring says Multiply has unified to train and send one or more TREK teams to North American and global locations, which has reduced costs and increased unity.

Another way that Multiply has restructured its programs to utilize resources and create a greater impact is by partnering with North American MB churches.

"The concept of being together is something that we hold on to in our programs," Quiring says. "It's not us over here doing our thing, the church over there doing their own thing, but it's striving to serve God in unity. We've wanted to take on a position of listening to our local churches, and that's the feedback we were getting was that people wanted to be in this together and be unified in making disciples locally, nationally and across the globe."

While in the past Multiply created training programs independently of churches, Quiring says Multiply now intentionally seeks out MB churches throughout the U.S. and Canada and sends FOCUS interns to serve in local churches.

Serving in churches while in training has opened the door for many participants to find ways to serve on mission even if they are not called across the world.

"If they don't go globally, we want them to go back to their home

church and be connected or find ways to be connected in a church and serve their communities wherever God calls them," Quiring says.

Over the years, that has looked like starting Bible studies in poverty areas, refugee outreach within the U.S. and Canada and church growth.

Letkeman says that the churches have provided a platform for participants to gain experience while also serving locally since many places are different in size, culture and ethnicity whether the church is large or small, rural or urban.

Ultimately, Multiply's changes have focused on developing leaders who will go and make disciples, whether

in global mission or in their local church.

"I feel like the flow of our program is really starting to get sharper and more defined not just for people who are wanting to be missionaries in another part of the world but for those who want to be missionaries at home or really be effective," Letkeman says. "It's been learning to help everyday people see that they are called to be a missionary in addition to maybe a doctor, architect or whatever and ask, 'How do we work together and become fishers of men not just in another part of the world but at home as well?'" —Caitlyn Decker



**The harvest is plenty
but the workers are few**

Invitations to serve on missional teams
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multiply 

Ohio church first to receive CORD funding

Grant will address space limits, pastoral education

With a sanctuary built for 60 people and an average weekly attendance of 90, Christian Center the Hand of God in Hamilton, Ohio, is bursting at the seams.

Pastor Hermann Mputu says this USMB congregation, comprised primarily of French-speaking immigrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has standing room only. The congregation's 60 children—from babies to teenagers—squeeze into one small room for Sunday school.

"We try to do what we can, but the first need is to expand our church building," Mputu says.

As the first congregation in USMB's CORD program, CCHG will receive funding to expand its space to accommodate growth and to equip Mputu. CORD is a ministry of the Integrated Immigrant Council that partners with immigrant churches to create self-sustaining churches and leaders equipped to teach and assist new and developing congregations.

While Mputu has a legal background, he has served nearly 17 years in ministry. He and his wife, Mamie, started CCHG with a prayer group in their living room in 2014. As the gathering grew, the group moved to other spaces, and the church officially organized in 2015. Three years in, the congregation collected money to purchase its current building.

Sunday services are in French and translated to English, while children are taught in English. Church ministries include a Wednesday night Bible study, Friday prayer meeting and Saturday leadership training.

Church membership nearly doubles the weekly attendance, but conflicting work schedules mean not



Hermann and Mamie Mputu began CCHG with a prayer group in their apartment living room in 2014. *Photo by CCHG*

everyone comes on a given Sunday. On special occasions, there is not room for everyone.

Mputu is bivocational, working up to 50 hours a week at a factory to support his ministry and family of six.

"It's a growing church, but right now, the church doesn't pay me," Mputu says. "I'm working somewhere else, but it's my calling to be a pastor."

Operating on five or six hours of sleep, Mputu wakes at 4 a.m. and returns home by 4 p.m. to pick up his children from school, make sure their homework is done and eat supper. He spends most evenings at church in personal prayer for the congregation, Bible study or corporate prayer.

Mputu is also at church most weekends, including Saturday for leadership training and choir practice and Sunday for the three-hour morning service. Sunday evening, he attends

a two-hour The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) class. TUMI is a ministry of World Impact that provides Christian leadership education.

CORD funds will ease Mputu's workload and fund his continued training.

"We are very excited (about) what God is doing here in Cincinnati, but one thing is time," Mputu says. "We can do more than what we're doing now, but I don't have enough time to focus on the ministry because I have a family to take care of."

Through CORD, USMB will partner with up to three Congolese churches, providing \$55,500 over three years. To qualify, a church must have joined a USMB district and credentialed its pastor. CORD is funded primarily by congregations and individual partners. MB Foundation is committed to matching the next \$27,750 donated for the CORD program.—*Janae Rempel*

An overseas invitation “For His Glory”

Tabor students lead worship at conference, connect with Multiply workers in Thailand

“For His Glory,” a Tabor worship team of 21 students, is accustomed to leading worship in chapel and occasionally traveling across state lines to visit MB churches, but an overseas invitation is rare.

David Martens, director of Contemporary Christian Music at Tabor and leader of “For His Glory,” presented his group with the news that his daughter, Kristen, employed by Crossworld, an international mission organization, had invited the team to lead worship at a conference in Thailand for its missionaries. The team would also visit Multiply missionaries Ozz and Sara Kumrod; Sara is a cousin to Martens’ wife, Lillian.

Upon hearing the initial proposition, six members latched onto the idea: Zach Beachy, Peoria, Ariz.; Lauren Christensen, Meade, Kan.; Olivia Jury, Hillsboro, Kan.; Paul Glanzer, Hillsboro, Kan.; Jonathan Unruh, Meade; and Jeff Tuten, Scottsdale, Ariz.

The students, led by Martens and his wife, spent a month fundraising and training, leaving for Thailand Jan. 19. Four days later they were leading the first of five worship ses-

sions of the week with Crossworld missionaries.

“The missionaries were so appreciative and encouraging,” Tuten says. “They’re devoting their whole lives to this, and we just stepped out for a week.”

For the final two days of their journey, “For His Glory” trekked to an area near Bangkok to visit the Kumrods.

The Kumrods hosted a worship night led by the Tabor team in a neighborhood park, offering free noodles to anyone attending. The park is home to a tree that has been made into a shrine because many locals believe it hosts a motherly spirit. To worship and praise Jesus in the same place is “significant in the spiritual realm,” Sara says.

“Before the concert, we prayed together,” Sara says. “I said, ‘You guys are helping us fight for Jesus.’ And that night, I sensed such a sweet presence of Jesus’ spirit.”

Before each song was sung in English, Ozz, with the help of a translator, asked the Tabor team to explain the meaning behind the lyrics, which was translated to Thai.

“One of our neighbors said, ‘I

couldn’t really understand because all of their songs were in English, but I could feel peace when they were singing,’” Sara says.

That weekend the Tabor team also led worship at the Kumrods’ house church, taught an English lesson to the children at Sara’s English club and spent time at Abundant Life Home with Ricky and Karen Sanchez.

For the Kumrods, the team’s presence helped further extend their community reach.

“I was just so impressed with their servant hearts and their posture of being learners,” Sara says. “When they came to our park, they were just ready to serve and show God’s love to our neighbors.”

The team returned to Kansas Jan. 31 with new visions of mission and worship.

“There was so much worship in just living with [the Kumrods],” Tuten says. “Just the presence of living and being in community with one another; there’s so much more that he has for us. Worship doesn’t have to be singing a couple of songs. Our whole lives are worship.”—Kara Unruh



Members of the Tabor College worship team, “For His Glory,” lead an outdoor worship service near Bangkok while in Thailand in January.
Photo by Tabor College

Church Life

Compiled by Janae Rempel

MILESTONES

Baptism/Memberships

Jodi Burge, Kris Burge and Nathan Enns were received as members at **Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan.**, April 2. Caleb Bigler was baptized March 19.

Mason Carstens, River Hann, Miah Harlow, Jedidiah Harlow, Allyson Jones, Trey Kamachi and Brayden Pastor were baptized at **South Mountain Community Church, St. George (Utah) Campus**, March 26.

Doug Gentry and Myra Gentry were received as members at **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church**, March 12. Ryan Absey, Kellie Absey and Michelle Pena were received as members Feb. 12.

Rey Mercado, Jessy Velazquez and Ian Rey were baptized at **Bethesda Church, Huron, S.D.**, March 19. Eight people were received as members March 12.

Chris Hiden, Elizabeth Hiden, Hadley Roche and Jarod Murphey were baptized and received as members at **Cross Timbers Church, Edmond, Okla.**, March 12. Lance Dockins, Kathryn Dockins, George Esch, Lynda Esch, Jarel Murphey, Ashley Murphey, Kira Murphey, Caleb Roche, Andy Stills, Ela Stills, Glenn Unruh and Donna Unruh were also received as members. Hope Wahlgren, Claire Wall, Addie Weaver and Ellie Weaver were also baptized.

Megan Mork, Pat Cupkie, Rodney Schultz, Sergio Garcia and Maxine Huerta

were baptized at **Redemption Church, Owatonna, Minn.**, Feb. 19.

Toni Keasler and Luke Harms were baptized at **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, Feb. 5.

Wendy Pack and Patrick Buchanan were baptized at **South Mountain Community Church, Lehi (Utah) Campus**.

Glen Zimmerman, Zach Clemmer, Matt Muehlhauser, Candace Godfrey, Hailee Yrigollen, Zephaniah Solorzano and Emma Aquino were baptized April 16 at **New Life Community, Dinuba, Calif.** Olusoji Brooks, Serenity Catcatan-Salazar, Claribel Gonzalez, Skye Mason, Sophia Suniga and Aria Suniga were baptized April 9.

Tiffany Barton, Nathan Barton and Winston Wimer were baptized and received as members at **Fairview (Okla.) MB Church** April 9. Emily Eitzen, Montie Barton, Brian Green and Misty Green were also received as members.

Workers

Jeff and Heather Hubrich concluded their service as pastoral couple at **Lakeview Church, Grantsville (Utah) Campus** March 26.

Deaths

Benavides, Roberto, Sanger, Calif., member of Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., May 10, 1936—March 3, 2023. Parents: Armando and Antonia Benavides. Spouse:

Rebecca. Children: Sylvia Vanhorn, Roberto Jr., Terri Luna, Jim, Deborah Quintanar, Noe; seven grandchildren, one great-grandchild.

Boucher, Pamela "Pam" Ann, Wichita, Kan., member of Ridgepoint Church, Wichita, July 3, 1962—Feb. 20, 2023. Parents: James and Wilma Brooks. Spouse: Jack C. Boucher. Children: Jack "Ryan," Chelsea Haley; four grandchildren.

Brandt, LaVada, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, July 19, 1921—Feb. 17, 2023. Parents: Cornelius and Bertha (Reddig) Loewen. Spouse: Albert Loewen (deceased). Children: Richard, Judy Walker (deceased), Linda Ritter; five grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, six great-great-grandchildren.

Friesen, Louise Blanch, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, Sept. 14, 1926—Dec. 18, 2022. Parents: Pete and Goldie (Fast) Ratzlaff. Spouse: Harlan Friesen (deceased). Children: Brenda Wall, Tim; four grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren.

Holden, Freddie Joe, Cordell, Okla., member of Corn (Okla.) MB Church, April 1, 1940—April 3, 2023. Parents: Howard Thomas and Mabel (Sherbourn) Holden. Spouse: Patricia Sue Williams. Children: Nancey, Michael, Brian; seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren.

Jost, Vera Loree, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, April 5, 1929—Feb. 17, 2023. Parents: Jacob K. and Elma Elizabeth

(Langhofer) Isaak. Spouse: Elmer Jost (deceased). Children: Rick, Jim (deceased), Tim, Mark; seven grandchildren, five great-grandchildren.

Klassen, Orpha Mae, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, July 23, 1929—March 8, 2023. Parents: J.P. and Amanda (Funk) Baltzer. Spouse: Jake Klassen (deceased). Children: Connie Fast, Dianne DeMarinis, Delora Doerkson; seven grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren.

Ratzlaff, Erma, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB Church, April 18, 1928—March 5, 2023. Parents: Elmer and Minnie (Krewall) Flaming. Spouse: Elroy Ratzlaff (deceased). Children: Kenny (deceased), Bob, Jean Penner; six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren.

Rodman, Leroy Earl "Bud", Stockton, Kan., member of North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., July 1, 1925—Feb. 13, 2023. Parents: Chalmer and Elsie Rodman. Spouse: Irene Knudson (deceased). Children: Stephen, Gail Gallaway; five grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren.

Seibel, Arnold Arthur, Kingman, Ariz., member of Cornerstone Community Church, Harvey, N.D., March 17, 1938—March 20, 2023. Parents: Arthur and Anna (Bich) Seibel. Spouse: May Cookman. Children: Scott, Mark; four grandchildren, three great-grandchildren.

CORRECTION: Unruh, Frances, Reedley, Calif., member of Reedley MB

Church, July 5, 1937—Oct. 31, 2022. Parents: Abe and Irma Dahl. Spouse: Neal Unruh (deceased). Children: Karen, Beverly Schnitzler, David; eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren.

REACHING IN

Discipleship

Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz., offered a prayer course April 16 and 23 to explore the meaning and benefits of prayer and equip people with a sustainable structure for personal prayer.

Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., with Every Neighborhood Partnership, hosted LivingUNDIVIDED, a six-week cohort experience designed for those interested in exploring the intersection of faith and race in pursuit of racial solidarity and justice.

Churches held Ash Wednesday services Feb. 22: **Mountain View Church, Fresno, Calif.**, **Buhler (Kan.) MB Church** held a prayer gathering, **North Fresno (Calif.) Church** offered Lenten stations; **Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, Kan.**, held a service with activities afterwards; **Butler Church, Fresno, Calif.**, held a service of confessional scripture reading and prayer.

Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., offered a six-week adult discipleship program, Poima, to bring people into a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Fellowship

Men from **The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**,

gathered for dinner, worship teaching and fellowship April 21.

Women from **North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan.**, gathered for food and fellowship April 17. The congregation held a sunrise service and breakfast April 9.

Women from **Reedley (Calif.) MB Church** were invited to a centerpiece floral arranging event April 17.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church offered donuts, coffee and a photo wall as part of its Easter service April 9. Women were invited to a paint night Feb. 10.

Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, Kan., held an Easter sunrise celebration and egg hunt following the worship service April 9.

Living Hope Church, Henderson, Neb., held a family Easter breakfast April 9. A men's night out Feb. 19 included a meal, cornhole, cards, knife throwing and crokinole.

Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif., celebrated Jesus' resurrection with a candy bar, boba tea, family photo opportunities and an Easter egg hunt April 8-9.

Reedley (Calif.) MB Church offered a family photo opportunity with a floral cross and an Easter courtyard cafe on April 9. The women's ministry held a soup and swap Feb. 23.

Zoar MB Church, Inman, Kan., held a sunrise service, breakfast and Easter egg hunt April 9.

Women went on a mystery trip April 8 and gathered for pizza and bunco March 12. Fathers and sons from **Copper Hills Church, Peoria, Ariz.**, went on a campout April 14-15.

Parkview MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., held an Easter sunrise service, breakfast and worship service and offered a photo booth April 9.

Hesston (Kan.) MB Church held a brunch and Easter egg hunt April 9. The church held a come-and-go service April 7 with worship, prayer, foot-washing, repentance and communion. The church had a live donkey and activities during children's church April 2. **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, hosted an Easter brunch April 2 with professional Easter photos taken of every family to be distributed April 9.

Stony Brook Church, Omaha, Neb., held a spring carnival and concert April 30. The church held a Passover seder meal April 6, a Good Friday service April 7 and a photo backdrop and egg hunt as part of Easter celebration services April 9.

The PrimeTimers group at **Ridgepoint Church, Wichita, Kan.**, was invited to a presentation of a Jewish Passover celebration March 30.

Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., held a game day March 26. Women were invited to a high tea March 25. The congregation hosted a chili and pie cook-off championship Feb. 26 with prizes.

Men from **Heritage Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif.**, were invited to attend Man Camp March 10-12.

Ebenfeld MB Church, Hillsboro, Kan., hosted its annual chili cook off March 4 with food and games.

Faith Bible Church, Omaha, Neb., hosted a friendship banquet Feb. 25 with a program.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church invited people to a Blossom Trail Railfest at Hillcrest Farms with children's play areas, trails, picnic areas and a free train ride March 5.

The Cornerstone Community Church, Topeka, Kan., worship team hosted an "Underground Cafe" March 3 with coffee, live music, fellowship and games.

Men from **Mountain View Church, Fresno, Calif.**, were invited to a Horseshoes and Hatchets event Feb. 23.

Women from **Shafter (Calif.) MB Church** were invited to a "Shine Bright" women's ministries event with a special speaker Feb. 4.

Worship

Women from **Pine Acres Church, Weatherford, Okla.**, gathered for an evening of worship and a guest speaker April 22.

Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz., held a Good Friday liturgy April 7 using art, music, prayer and contemplation around the theme of Christ's crucifixion. The church hosted Scott Erickson's Say Yes Liturgy. Axiom Worship

Church Life continued

released three original songs, "Songs of Easter," April 7.

Lincoln Glen Church, San Jose, Calif., held a Good Friday service April 7, egg hunt for community kids April 8 with an ice cream truck, crafts and bounce houses, and an Easter breakfast and service April 9.

Bible Fellowship Church, Minot N.D., held a Good Friday service April 7 and an Easter breakfast and service April 9.

Copper Hills Church, Peoria, Ariz., held a reflective Good Friday service April 7, and outdoor sunrise service and Easter services April 9.

Neighborhood Church, Fresno, Calif., invited people to attend a public art display of the Stations of the Cross April 7. The congregation gathered for a worship gathering and brunch April 9.

Bethany Church, Fresno, Calif., held a self-guided, interactive prayer station tour April 7.

Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif., held an evening of worship, communion and prayer April 7.

The Bridge Bible Church, Bakersfield, Calif., held a Good Friday worship gathering April 7. The church hosted a worship and teaching night Feb. 27.

North Oak Community Church, Hays, Kan., held a praise and worship night April 2.

Butterfield (Minn.) Community Bible Church hosted a Sunday of Worship with hymns and Scripture reading March 19.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church held a hymn sing March 5 with conversation about starting a seniors ministry.

Celebrations

SouthLife Church, Wichita, Kan., held a dedication service April 2 and its formal launch April 9.

Neighborhood Church, Visalia, Calif., celebrated its 75th birthday, March 26.

Renewal MB Church, Rapid City, S.D., celebrated its fifth birthday March 12.

Copper Hills Church, Peoria, Ariz., celebrated its 25th birthday with a barbeque and Movie in the Park event March 11 and a celebration service March 12.

REACHING OUT

Locally

People from **Hesston (Kan.) MB Church** volunteered by taking a shift or preparing a meal for New Hope Shelter in April. The congregation collected food for the Hesston Resource Center and was asked to invite their neighbors to donate and attend Palm Sunday and Easter services.

Neighborhood Church, Fresno, Calif., held an Easter carnival April 8 with 5,000 eggs for children and a Bible lesson.

North Fresno (Calif.) Church held an Easter Jam April 8 with a pancake breakfast, an interactive Easter Story experience, photos with the Easter bunny, gathering Easter eggs and games.

Butler Church, Fresno, Calif., partnered with Summer Park Apartments to host a Spring Resources Fair April 7.

Mountain View Church, Fresno, Calif., hosted a free sports camp at its Sunnyside Campus April 3, and a kids spring spectacular event with games and crafts at its Main Campus April 4.

Axiom Church, Peoria, Ariz., went on a prayer walk for its neighborhood, April 1.

Beginning the week of April 13, people from **Faith Bible Church, Omaha, Neb.**, handed out nearly 1,000 flyers to homes in the church neighborhood including notice of an upcoming cleanup day and an invitation to connect with FBC.

Classifieds

Family Ministries Pastor: Buhler (Kan.) MB Church is seeking a family ministries pastor. Position will oversee ministries to children and youth (through high school). Priority for this position will be to advance discipleship for students and families. Buhler MB is an established church in a small Kansas town. For more information (job description) and to apply please visit <http://www.buhlermbchurch.org/Staff-Hire>

Lead Pastor: Valleyview Bible Church, Cimarron, Kan., is seeking a lead pastor. We are a Christ-centered, Bible teaching church and have a multi-generation group ranging from young children to young adults and senior citizens. Bible exposition, contemporary/traditional praise and worship are featured in our church services. We have youth-centered programs on Wednesday evenings for high school and junior high youth. There is also an AWANA program that serves ages 3 through 6th grade. Potential candidates can apply on line at <https://valleyviewbiblechurch.wordpress.com/pastoral-search/> or contact Charles Sauerwein at candc@ucom.net / text 620-272-6928 or Wayne Bartel at lynnbartel65@att.net / text 620-339-2243

Lead Pastor: Koerner Heights Church in Newton, Kan., is searching for a lead pastor. Please find more information at koernerheights.org/employment or email frontdesk@koernerheights.org.

Youth Pastor: Koerner Heights Church in Newton, Kan., is searching for a youth pastor. Please find more information at koernerheights.org/employment or email frontdesk@koernerheights.org.

Plant Pastor: Community Bible Church (CBC) in Olathe, Kan., is seeking a plant pastor, a servant leader called to make disciples through church planting. The plant pastor will begin his role at CBC, spending up to two years in training with other CBC pastors, developing and organizing a team that will plant a new church and working to develop and implement a church planting strategy. He will lead individuals and the church to develop a heart for and engage in the work of building the kingdom and will have all the responsibilities of preaching, pastoring, leading and shepherding the planted church. If interested or to see a complete job description, contact Kirk Carlson at kscarlson64@gmail.com.

Pastor of Student Ministries: Shafter (Calif.) MB Church is searching for a full-time pastor of student ministries to oversee junior high, high school and college ministries. Shafter is a community of approximately 20,000 located in the southern San Joaquin Valley of California, 10 miles northwest of Bakersfield. A full job description and additional information is available at <https://www.shaftermb.org/psm/>

Worship Pastor/Director: Hillsboro (Kan.) MB Church is looking for a full-time or part-time worship pastor or director. The job description is flexible depending on the gifting, availability and experience of the candidate and could also include other ministries. If you are interested, send resume and worship leading sample or link to hmbcsearchteam@gmail.com or contact us here if you have more questions.

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