



# THE FORESEE

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

July/August 2008 Volume 40, No. 4

## Around The Conference From Tornado to Triumph

From Rev. Bob Strauch, Rocky Mountain Area Representative

So what should you do when your church gets blown down? That was the question confronting the people of Hope Congregational Church in the summer of 1993. Located 19 miles northwest of Burlington, Colorado near the Kansas border, this church sat right in the middle of the wheat-bearing fields called The Settlement. Should the people of Hope build a church in town or rebuild in the country?

After much conversation with God and with each other, the people of Hope believed that the Lord wanted them to

maintain His presence among the farm folk. So they rebuilt. It was not easy. The work was much and the laborers were few. For a decade afterward, it continued to be difficult to attract new people to the Settlement.

But then things changed.

In 2004, the Lord helped the people of Hope rekindle their vision for what He could do in and among the people of the Settlement. A prayer committee formed and began to lead the people in fervent prayer for both active AND inactive members.

A vibrant Vacation Bible School program was expanded into an aggressive youth outreach. Followup efforts to both young and old intensified. And now Pastor Carl Rogers reports, "We have a vision. We are praying for a revival in Kit Carson County. That's what our people pray for everyday and our church prays for every week. We believe the Lord will do it."

It sounds like the Lord has already started, as He is bringing the people of Hope from tornado to triumph!



## Location! Location! Location!

By Rev. J. Kirk van der Swaagh, Greater NYC/NJ Area Representative

This old real estate mantra intones the importance of context. In gospel terms, where we are ministering plays a vital role in how we are ministering. This axiom is reflected in the work of many CCCC members in this diverse area. The stately steeple of First Congregational of Middletown rises above the unoccupied downtown storefronts of this once vibrant manufacturing city. Pastor Dan Hogan senses the importance of the building's prominence and envisions a revitalized church playing an important role in revitalizing the downtown area. The Bronx Household of Faith watches their long-prayed-for "meeting house" steadily progress toward completion. Over the years they have resourcefully responded to the needs of the children in their community. As it will be located directly across the street from the neighborhood public school, they anticipate that their new, highly visible facility will open up new opportunities. Neighborhood Church and David Haberer with Church for All Nations, are engaging the creative communities that surround them in Manhattan through performances and art installations. Community Bible Church of Inwood is in a transitioning residential neighborhood as Orthodox Jews purchase most of the homes near their building. Pastor Tim Broberg is taking pains to know how best to reach them. Stan Wiley is serving the only evangelical body in a resort community on the Jersey Shore. He ministers to a diverse group of renters, second-home owners, along with the many seniors who have lived on this beach island across the bridge from Atlantic City for more than 30 years.

While the gospel remains the same, each of these contexts (and there are a few more that could be listed) makes peculiar and creative demands of our churches and ministers to be "all things to all people that by all means we might save some."

### On the inside...

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## From the Conference Minister

### Time for a Tune-up?

Do you tend to stay current with vehicle maintenance, or are you prone to wait until there is a serious problem before paying attention to it? What about your spiritual maintenance, and that of your local church?



Rev. Dr. Stephen A. Gammon,  
CCCC Conference Minister

I confess that with vehicle maintenance I am often prone toward neglect — assuming things will go along fine without much attention — and learning the hard way that this is neither safe nor wise. I fear the same has at times been true of me spiritually. But God mercifully reminds me that for my life and for our churches we must be intentional about maintenance — always aiming for peak performance for His glory!

Tune-ups require multiple checks and corrections; so let's be carefully examining six areas of a spiritual tune-up — for our own lives and (with other brothers and sisters in Christ) for our local congregations and Conference. Doing so could bring revival!

**1. Envision Restoration** of what could be! May there be longing for closer communion with Christ, more power from Christ, and increased boldness for Christ. Without such longing, complacency rules the day. For ourselves and our congregations let us pray Psalm 85:6 *Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?*

**2. Complete Purification** of sin through repentance and faith in Christ! Just as a carburetor cannot run well when it is dirty; neither can Christians or Churches run well for Christ when there is sin in our lives. 2 Chronicles 7:14, Acts 2:38 and 1 John 1:9 remind us of the firm requirement of confession and repentance. Cleanse us, Lord!

**3. Open Communication** with God! There are two basic aspects of this: Listening to God through His Word (1 Samuel 3:10; Mark 9:7) and devoting ourselves to a lifestyle of prayer (Acts 2:42; Colossians 4:2). May these be ever experienced in practice!

**4. Strengthen Connections** with One Another! This is an important part of our CCCC vision of Honoring Jesus Christ Together. Our Annual Meeting theme is *"In Him... Joined Together"* (Ephesians 2:21–22). God moves among those who unite in Him!

**5. Choose Consecration** to God! Have we given our ALL to Jesus or offered Him only a part? He requires our all! (Mark 12:29–30; Luke 9:57–63) All for you, Lord Jesus!

**6. Demonstrate Compassion** in Jesus' name! There must be in us a determination to be missional in focus, fulfilling our created purpose — to BE the Body of Christ and DO the Will of Christ, for the Honor of Jesus Christ! (1 Corinthians 12:27 and 13:13)

After a needed tune-up recently I MARVEL at how much better my vehicle runs! May the same be true for each of us and for His Churches!



## THE FORESEE

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Conf. President: Nick Granitsas

Conf. Minister: Steve Gammon

### Conference Office:

Phone: 651-739-1474

Fax: 651-739-0750

E-mail: dmjohnson@cccusa.com

Website: www.cccusa.com

Prayer Requests:

CCCCprayer@hotmail.net

Mail address:

8941 Highway 5

Lake Elmo, MN 55042

THE FORESEE Editor:

Ken McGarvey

121 Chatuga Drive

London, TN 37774

E-mail: kenandjoy@bellsouth.net

Phone: 865-458-0680

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*More pictures from the New Ipswich transformation (see page 5)*



## From the Northeast Regional Minister

Rev. Terry H. Shanahan, Northeast Regional Minister

### Day Foundation Comes Alongside Northeast Position

The Lord's work in the Northeast is going well. There are a host of congregationally governed churches seeking to know more about our Conference and desiring to partner with us in Kingdom work under a biblically-based umbrella. Our ministry of redevelopment has been blessed by the recent visit of Dr. John Kimball, who spoke at our Annual New England Congregational Fellowship Conference, and at a separate workshop which was held for our New Hampshire and Vermont pastors. Many churches realize the need for revitalization and are becoming intentional about revitalization in their churches. The church multiplication efforts have been successful to the point that our church plant in Malden, Massachusetts will be birthing a new church this summer.

As a Conference that is honoring Christ together, we are reaching people for the Lord in ways we have never reached them before. As I travel I am amazed at the testimonies of folks of all ages, from two teenagers I recently met, to a lady 87 years young, who have given their life to Christ through the ministry of CCCC's churches and pastors.

God Is Good, All the Time! This is exciting work that He has allowed us to join Him in. These are wonderful times to be "Connected to Christ, Changing Our Communities." But there is a critical need for funding for this work. I am excited to tell you about a wonderful new giving opportunity to the Northeast position. The Cecil B Day Foundation is coming alongside me

to raise up new contributors. This is what they wrote.

*"We are pleased to share in your vital ministry to pastors and churches in the Northeast with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. Your encouragement and leadership is so helpful to fortify those who serve on the front lines. To that end, the Cecil B Day foundation will offer support in the form of a matching grant. This grant will be made for one year, through March 2009. The foundation will match up to \$500.00 for each new gift or pledge, though we hope many will be greater than that."*

I am grateful and humbled that a foundation outside of our Conference is partnering with us in this ministry. They see the need for new giving to this Northeast position, and I pray that many of you will see the need as well. Please consider sending a gift of any amount, knowing that it will be matched up to \$500.00. You can send your gifts to the home office, marked "NERM — New Giver."

Yours in Christ,  
Terry



## Conviction Without Compromise

A book review by Ted Boren, Pastor of North Congregational Church of New Salem, MA.

I recently read a book titled *Conviction Without Compromise* by theologian/philosopher Norman Geisler and theologian/cult expert Ron Rhodes. It is subtitled: "Standing Strong in the Core Beliefs of the Christian Faith." It reminded me of our CCCC position on this matter: in essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty and in all things charity.

The authors divide their material into three categories, devoting sixteen chapters to the essentials as they see them. Evidencing their precision regarding essentials, I quote:

"Is it necessary to believe all the essential doctrines in order to be saved? An important distinction must be made at this juncture. There is a difference between a doctrine necessary to make salvation possible and one that is necessary to believe in order to be saved (p.11)."

The authors make the point that majors should not be reduced to minors, nor, should minors be made into majors. "All too often Christian groups, large and small, have made

fundamentals out of non-fundamentals, thus unnecessarily dividing the body of Christ" (p.209).

There is much information on church history, the cults, the creeds, and viewpoints with which to agree or disagree. One small misstatement from page 258: "Congregationalists,

Baptists, and others springing from the Anabaptist tradition insist on baptism by immersion."

From the last chapter, "Loving in the Present," the authors

state: "The Apostle Paul struck the perfect balance when he exhorted the Ephesians about the importance of *speaking the truth in love* (Ephesians 4:15). Fallen humans are, unfortunately, creatures of extreme."

For its theological and practical balance I highly recommend this book to our CCCC family.

**"Standing Strong in the Core Beliefs of the Christian Faith."**

## Dwight L. Moody, Lay Evangelist

By Alwyn York, Conference Historian

The life of D. L. Moody is dramatic evidence of the power of God to transform an individual. Through God's grace, an uneducated, inarticulate rustic young man became a powerful evangelist who drew crowds in the tens of thousands in Great Britain and the United States. His ministry began among the urban poor of Chicago, and he always remained someone whom the common people heard gladly; but before his career was finished his preaching made a powerful impact on the titled nobility of England, and multitudes of college students.

Dwight Lyman Moody was born in 1837, a native of the rural village of Northfield, Massachusetts. His early religious training was in the local Unitarian Church, where his widowed mother brought her family. At the age of seventeen he went to seek his fortune in the city of Boston, where he ended up selling shoes for his uncle. His uncle insisted that he attend their church, the Congregational Church of Mount Vernon, which, unlike his church at home, was Trinitarian and evangelistic. During a visit to the store where he worked, his Sunday School teacher led him to trust in Christ for salvation. When he first applied to join the church, the deacons discovered that he expressed himself so poorly that they couldn't be sure he was a true convert. His membership ended up being deferred a year while he received further instruction.

Moody was a young man of boundless energy and ambition. He did very well in business in Boston, but after awhile he came to feel that there were not sufficient opportunities for him there. In 1856 he moved to the bustling western city of Chicago. In Chicago he continued to excel in sales, and got involved in Sunday School work. He proved so successful at bringing in the children of Chicago's poor neighborhoods that he soon presided over perhaps the largest Sunday School in the country, with an attendance of 650. At first he did not attempt to preach or teach, but used other people to do this. His first efforts at public speaking came about on occasions when he wasn't able to find enough help for his Sunday School, and so had to fill the pulpit himself.

His success at Sunday School work led to his becoming the president of the Chicago YMCA, and speaking at YMCA conventions around the country. (At this time the YMCA was a powerful evangelistic force in the cities of America.) Further spiritual development came about as he ministered to wounded soldiers during the Civil War.

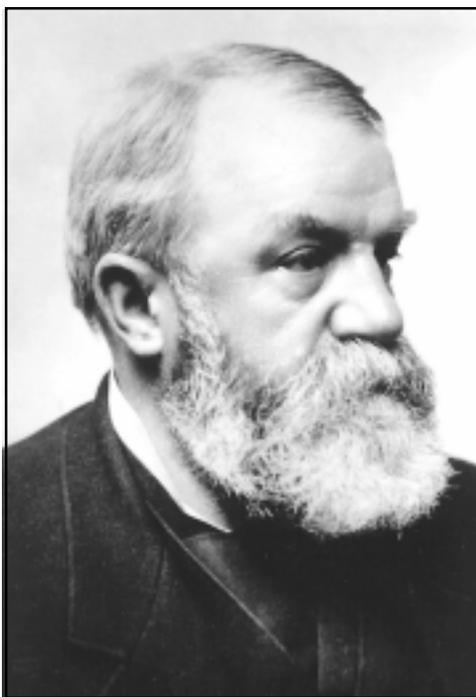
Phenomenal success as a evangelist began during a visit to Great Britain in 1873. He had teamed up with Ira Sankey, a gospel singer whose voice had a powerful emotional impact. It was after he accepted an invitation to conduct meetings in Edinburgh, Scotland that an extraordinary response to his preaching began to be seen. The Scots were notoriously reserved and naturally suspicious of the orthodoxy of someone from outside their circle, but found their hearts melted by Moody's simple, down-to-earth style as he set forth the love and mercy of God, and pleaded for them to receive His grace.

After powerful evangelistic campaigns in Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin, and various cities in England, culminating with a mission in London, he returned to America and continued to preach to multitudes in the major cities of America. His sermons and reports of his meetings were published in newspapers all across the country. The hymnbooks he produced with Ira Sankey became favorites in homes around the world, and could have made them wealthy, but they donated all royalties to various ministries.

As an uneducated lay preacher, his impact upon college students was especially remarkable. In 1882 an initially hostile reception at Cambridge University in England gave way to warm acceptance and numerous conversions. A legendary group of missionaries, the "Cambridge Seven," all athletic, popular college men from aristocratic families, committed themselves to service in China in response to Moody's meetings there. The student missionary conferences he held at Mount Hermon School, which he started near his boyhood home in Northfield, Massachusetts,

produced many missionaries, and was the inspiration for the worldwide Student Volunteer movement.

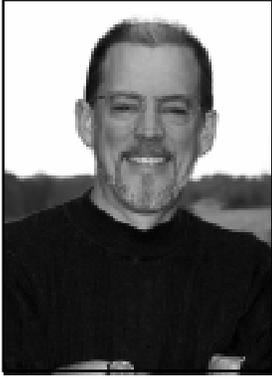
Despite worldwide fame, he remained humble and unpretentious. He never sought ordination. He was respectful of the professional ministry, and was always eager to learn whatever he could from those with more education, but believed he had a unique calling as a lay witness. To the end of his days he remained, as he once said, "plain D. L. Moody," an ordinary man whom the Lord used to do extraordinary things.



# A Kingdom Paradigm

By Dr. John Kimball, CCCC Director of Conference Care and Church Redevelopment

I believe that every CCCC church desires to be used of God to reach its own community. And regardless of where a church happens to fall within the doctrinal spectrum of our Conference family, if that church is a member of the CCCC then it is evangelical at heart. So why do so many of our churches find it hard to be effective in ministry, outreach and evangelism to those who are not yet part of the family of faith? From my ongoing study of the Church at large, and what I'm seeing within most of the churches with which I work, I think it might best be described as fruit of a "Church Paradigm."



What is this "Church Paradigm"? Quite simply, it's the natural focus of local churches across America to exist primarily for their own benefit. Nationally we see this

condition increasing, but even within our Conference too many of our churches spend most (if not all) of their time, financial and human resources on ministering to the needs and desires of those who are already members of the congregation. Some of these churches struggle to identify even a simple tithe reserved for missions and evangelistic work. With the notable exception of holiday outreach activities between Thanksgiving and Christmas, or sometimes a truly evangelistic Vacation Bible School, most congregations plan their ministry almost exclusively according to their own needs.

Such churches need to make a purposeful transition to a "Kingdom Paradigm" of ministry. The "Kingdom Paradigm" does not neglect the ongoing ministry and discipleship needs of the church family; however, its primary focus is on the

kingdom of God as a whole. Members see their church, its ministry and its resources as part of a much greater plan. Church activities are regularly planned to reach a far wider audience. The church's schedule, budget and human resources are strategically distributed to bless both the church family and those living out in the community and around the world who have yet to meet Jesus as Savior. Even the church's staffing is different.

Want to move your church in such a direction? Then consider some of the following suggestions (but be careful...these may be radical!):

1. As you make your budget for the next fiscal year, take some time to measure your planned spending against Acts 1:8 — how much is planned for reaching your own "Jerusalem," "Judea," "Samaria" and "the Ends of the Earth"?
2. If you are considering additional staff, why not hire a Minister of Evangelism *first* (rather than a children's director, youth pastor, or music director)?
3. When planning your pastor's benefits package, add in enough money to send him on a short-term, foreign missions trip every other year — it will change both your pastor's ministry and your church!
4. If your church receives a special benevolent gift, resist the temptation to invest it in a money market or similar account, and prayerfully determine as a congregation where to *use* the money for the greatest spiritual return on investment: assisting your missionaries, supporting a church plant, or perhaps even undergirding the needs of another church undergoing redevelopment.

Establish a "Kingdom Paradigm": Focus beyond your church and watch what God does!

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## Cornerstone Corps Helps Toward Victory in New Ipswich

Two years ago our New Ipswich Congregational Church faced a major crisis. Our doors were closed to all use due to major structural problems in our beloved 100-year-old church building. Do we rebuild from scratch or do we restore what we have? And where do we get all this money? Many, many decisions with lots and lots of prayer had to be made before we could even begin to move forward with a final plan. We finally voted to take a giant leap of faith, not only to restore our beloved building, but also do what was necessary so that the building would last at least another 100 years. We were building for the future, for the next 100 years.

We only have a small congregation and in order for this to happen, many church members took on the task of working on more than one committee at a time. We have also borrowed a huge amount of money, but our small and faithful congregation has stepped up to the plate to make sure that money will be paid back. We know that the community of New Ipswich is carefully watching us. We are hoping that they see the wonders God can accomplish with a small congregation like ours through the restoration of our beloved building. The much-needed and appreciated support and donations from the many CCCC churches through the Cornerstone Corps helps ensure that the Word of God will, again, be preached from our pulpit in New Ipswich.

(more photos page 2)



## What Is the “Essence” of Christianity?

A few weeks ago I attended a seminar where Dr. John Kimball asked, “What is the essence of Christianity?” That got me thinking.

The word “essence” refers to something that is intrinsic, fundamental or indispensable. Frequently the word is used to describe perfumes or scents. Recently, for example, I came across an ad for “essence oils and shampoos.” In a different context I heard someone describe their neighbor as the “essence of hospitality.” Another author observes that a good Chinese fortune cookie distills the essence of wisdom in twelve words or less. Sir Henry Taylor used the word “essence” when he observed, “He who gives what he would readily throw away, gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice.” (Sir Henry Taylor, quoted in *New Beginnings. Christianity Today*, Vol. 34, No. 3.)

So what is the essence of Christianity? What is central in the life and teachings of Jesus? The first half of the answer to that question is revealed in a comment made by Cuban pastor Eloy Cruz in response to a question from former president Jimmy Carter regarding the secret of his success as a pastor.

“He was modest and embarrassed,” wrote Carter, “but he finally said, ‘Señor Jimmy, we only need to have two loves in our lives. For God, and for the person who happens to be in front of us at any time.’” Carter went on to say that that simple yet profound theology has been a great help to him in understanding the Scriptures. In essence, the whole Bible is an explanation of those two loves. (Jimmy Carter, *Sources of Strength: Meditations on Scripture for a Living Faith*, Times Books, 1997, p. xvii.)

The second half of the essence of Christianity appears numerous times in the pages of Scripture and may be summarized with the word “truth.” For example, in Ephesians 6:14 Paul exhorts us to gird on the belt of truth.

Love without truth deteriorates into mere sentimentality. Truth without love may be cold, harsh, and lifeless. But truth plus love reflects the heart of God.

Let this be the essence of our prayers: “Lord, fill our minds with truth and our hearts with love.”

Philip J. Noordmans  
Chinese Community Church, San Diego, California

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## The Phillips Fund at Work

Dr. Ron Hamilton, CCCC Director of Church Multiplication

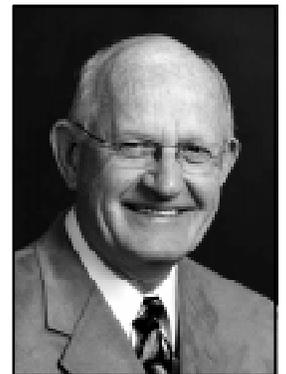
The Conference received a wonderful gift in 2005 when the Phillips Church in Boston closed its ministry and dedicated their assets to the development of a church multiplication movement in the CCCC. It is a joy to inform you where these funds are going and how they are being used.

1. Brookwood Community Church — Shakopee, Minnesota. Pastor Rob O’Neal says, “The Phillips Fund is already changing lives and is having ripple effects for the Kingdom of God. People look at this new church as a chance to reconnect with God after years of ignoring him.”
2. The Meetinghouse Church — Salem, Massachusetts. Pastor Matt Kaminski says, “The financial assistance has enabled us to begin a grass roots ministry through a house church network, seeking to bring the gospel back to Salem person by person, neighborhood by neighborhood in this city which is the center of Wicca and paganism in the United States.”
3. Sovereign Grace Church — Los Angeles. Pastor Alex Choi says, “The Phillips Fund has made it possible for me to devote all of my energies into counseling, teaching, networking, and the other aspects of planting a missional church in an urban city.”
4. New Heights Community Church — Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. Pastor Dan Schauer says, “We can now offer ministries to reach out to our community in ways that would not have been possible without the assistance. God is using the Phillips Fund to impact our community for Jesus Christ!”

5. 7 Mile Road Church — Boston. Pastor Matt Kruse says, “The support from the Phillips Fund has enabled us to launch four ‘soul care communities’ in which small groups gather on a regular basis for confession, conversation, discipleship and community. We also have started quarterly conversational/training gatherings for those involved directly in Gospel-centered, missional church planting in greater Boston.”

6. 7 Mile Road Church — Philadelphia. Pastor Ajay Thomas says, “Our prayer is that God would use these funds for the birthing of a movement of reformed, missional, Gospel churches among second-generation Asian Indians in Philadelphia and beyond.”

The Phillips Bequest has also been used to fund the position of Director of Church Multiplication for three years. As we are now half-way through that time period, I can say that it has been my joy to encourage church multiplication in the CCCC across the country. God is at work as we birth healthy reproducing churches with a mission to make disciples of our Lord Jesus.



## *Promotions to Glory*

### **Avery Anton Wetzig**

Avery Anton Wetzig went to be with the Lord on May 4, 2008. He was a retired CCCC pastor who had served many years in churches and camps. He had ministered with the American Sunday School Union early in his career, and also helped establish the Midwest Indian Mission in Crandon, Wisconsin. He and his wife Bertha were married 63 years and had six children, one of whom is CCCC pastor, Rev. Rod Wetzig.

He claimed as his life verses Psalm 91:14-16 *“Because he loves me,” says the LORD, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

### **Gerald L Hedlund**

Gerald L Hedlund was born December 9, 1912 in Traverse City, Michigan. He died on May 21, 2008 at Bortz Health Care of Traverse City. He was 95 years old. He joined the CCCC in October, 1978. Gerald founded and built three churches in Michigan and served 3 to 5 churches at one time on a circuit. His wife preceded him in death.



***See You There!***

## *Changes and Opportunities*

### **Pastoral Changes:**

|                   |  |                   |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Santa Barbara CA  | Bethany Congregational Church*         | Anthony Chaboya   |
| Emporia KS        | First Congregational Church*           | Andrew McHenry    |
| Thompson Falls MT | Thompson Falls Community Cong. Church* | Milton Reimer*    |
| Lake View NY      | Lake View Congregational Church*       | Cliff Pruitt      |
| New Ipswich NH    | New Ipswich Congregational Church*     | Peter Wood*       |
| Woodbury MN       | Woodbury Community Church*             | Brian Schulenburg |

### **Pastoral Openings:**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Longmont CO       | Christ Congregational Church*                   |
| Garner IA         | Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church*           |
| Parkersburg IA    | First Congregational Church* (Associate Pastor) |
| Kellogg ID        | United Church of Kellogg*                       |
| Rockland ID       | Rockland Congregational Church (Part-time)*     |
| Peoria Heights IL | Peoria Heights Congregational Church*           |
| Winchester IN     | Winchester Congregational Christian Church      |
| Georgetown, MA    | Byfield Parish Church (UCC) (Associate)         |
| South Grafton, MA | Union Congregational Church* (Part-time)        |
| Cannon Falls MN   | First Congregational Church                     |
| Kulm ND           | First Congregational Church*                    |
| Boulder City NV   | Grace Community Church                          |
| Candia NH         | Candia Congregational Church                    |
| Nottingham NH     | Nottingham Christian Congregational Church*     |
| Beloit WI         | Shopiere Congregational Church                  |

\* = Conference member

## **Health Tips**

### **Safe Driving**

Strength and flexibility exercises will help keep your driving performance at its best and add years to your driving life. Consider flexibility exercises for the neck to be able to check the blind spots. Hand, arm and leg strengthening will help with your reaction time. A daily brisk walk for 30 minutes will increase your strength.

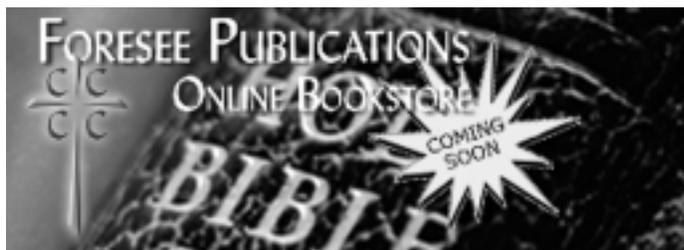
Adjusting the rear view mirrors properly in and outside of the car will help reduce the size of the blind spots. Adjust the driver's seat so you have a clear line of sight at least 3 inches above the steering wheel and still reach the gas pedal and be able to apply pressure to the brake pedal. The head restraints should be adjusted so your head, not your neck, will be protected.

Customizing your car may be necessary with oversized mirrors, pads to raise your seat height or pedal extensions. A ribbon or string on the seat belt may make it easier to reach.

Source: [aarp, nov2007](#)

Betty Mitchell, RN, Parish Nurse  
Emmanuel Bethel Church  
Royal Oak, MI

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