



THE FORESEE

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

September/October 2008 Volume 40, No. 5

Around The Conference

What Were We Expecting

(Editor's note: *In this report from Around the Conference we share the very personal testimony of a pastor and the day-to-day struggles pastors often face, with the hope that God provides as we trust Him..*)

When I received a call to pastor in central Vermont, I rejoiced! I grew up in Vermont, and don't remember ever hearing the gospel. God put a desire in my heart to reach those who, like me, "had not heard." When I came to the small UCC church I now serve, I expected the work to be slow, but my hope was that after two or three years of hearing the Word of God, these people would gladly embrace the gospel of grace, and the kingdom of God would flourish in the Green Mountain state.

It's been over five years, not much has changed. A few have "gladly embraced the gospel of grace," but mostly I see rejection, at various levels — sometimes it's outright; mostly it's by a tentative, "wait-and-see posture" toward Jesus. I've watched new "converts" put their "hand to the plow and look back" and lose their way. My wife and I have

been falsely accused, slandered, and experienced spiritual attack.

But please don't feel sorry for us! Even though this is not what we were expecting, we're reminded of Jesus and what He experienced. Should we expect anything different? Thank God our hope is not in our work, but in His finished work. When falsely accused, He was faithful; when slandered, He continued to love. When we respond as He did, we get glimpses of the advance of the kingdom of God in the Green Mountain state.

Indeed, there are more than just "glimpses" of the advance of the kingdom here in Vermont, and perhaps I'm remiss not to highlight them here. But the reality is that much of the work of the kingdom is slow, but it comes. It comes when we identify with our Savior and respond as He did.

Tim Sargent

Welcome from Iowa!

We are getting ready for the CCCC Annual Family Conference in 2009. This year has been tough. We have a member church in Parkersburg, which on May 25 was hit by a tornado. This tornado cut a swath up to a half mile wide through that region that leveled the southern half of the town, destroying over 200 homes, two dozen businesses and the high school — in a town of 1,000. It is amazing that

none of the town's six houses of faith were damaged. Sadly, 8 people were killed and there were over 50 injured. FEMA estimates the damage at around \$6 million.

Pastor Brad Zinnecker and First Congregational Church in Parkersburg are very thankful for the generous gifts that have come in from CCCC churches and others. They have also had an overwhelming number of



folks coming in to help who used their hall and kitchen to stay in town. In all 60 of their families have been affected by the tornado. They have also just learned that there is some structural damage to their building.

Pastor Brad asks for prayer for the people in the church and in Parkersburg. Pray for patience in this stressful time. Brad would also like us to pray that people

would learn to trust God more through this time and have their faith strengthened. Please pray also for those who have experienced the unprecedented flooding in June. In short, PRAY for the folks in Iowa — it has been a rough time here.

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From the Conference Minister

The parable of the prodigal son told by Jesus and recorded in Luke 15 includes a wonderful image of the transforming power of God's love when the Father (OUR Father) runs toward his son, embraces and kisses him, and joyfully welcomes him home. All who have come to Christ in repentance and faith can identify with the younger son in Jesus' story. We know the incredible wonder and power of the amazing grace of our God!



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

Our Lord intends that His Body the church will now visibly demonstrate in and through our connections with each other this amazing love of our Father in the world, in visible obedience to the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-39) and in fulfillment of the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Are we doing it? More and more in the CCCC it IS happening! Our ministry initiatives together in Church Redevelopment and in Church Multiplication are already bearing MUCH fruit! Praise be to God!

The theme of our annual meeting this year was "Connected in Christ." God gave us a taste of what He is calling us to as a Conference. He did so in the following ways, which are all the sweet privilege of the Body of Christ: "Connected in Christ" there was rich fellowship, inspired worship, anointed exposition of God's Holy Word, edifying discussion, powerful intercession, God-honoring testimonies, divine appointments for all, needful conviction, sharing in word and deed, inspired vision, ministry networking, renewed strength for the tired, personal encouragement for the discouraged, specific answers for the seeking, tangible support for the lonely, real care for the hurting, a warm welcome for the wandering, and grace and joy for all who came! Though we live on this side of heaven, when we are "Connected in Christ" God gives us a foretaste of what is to come. Our God is wonderfully moving in and through the CCCC! He is calling us to proclaim His truth and demonstrate His love — and we're doing it! Our loving Father intends that we His Body will be "Connected in Christ," and

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that in all our various communities and wherever He may send us, we will demonstrate His love in this world, declaring His message of reconciliation and welcoming sinners home to Him. Are we doing it? May it be increasingly so in our Conference!



Exciting Changes Coming Soon in The FORESEE!

Beginning with the January 2009 issue, The FORESEE will take on a new look. Several immediate improvements will be obvious:

- It will be in full color.
- It will be published monthly.
- It will be more current.
- It will have more information.

How can we do all this when printing and distribution costs are skyrocketing and newspapers are downsizing? I'm glad you asked. It will primarily be available online, though printed copies will also be available.

Since 72.3% of the population now uses the Internet, we

know that many do not. Therefore, most of our CCCC churches will print out copies for their members who don't use the Internet. Others may place orders with the CCCC office to have theirs sent by mail. But most will be able to read it online, or print it out themselves so they will have hard copies on hand.

This has been months in study and planning, involving the editor, the Editorial Committee, the Conference Staff and the Board of Directors. It is not without weaknesses, but we believe it will be a significant improvement, and will increase readership and interest in the long run.

Full information, as well as sign-up for printed copies will be available in the November-December issue.

From the Northeast Regional Minister

Rev. Terry H. Shanahan, Northeast Regional Minister

Who Are We?

I have been involved with some churches lately that are in transition. They are at that place where the pastor has left, for whatever reason, and they need to regroup. This is a time of rediscovery. A time to do congregational surveys. A time to come up with a church profile. A time to ask the all important question, “Who are we as a church?”

It has been interesting to see how different churches struggle with that question. And heartwarming to see churches refocusing on Christ and wanting to be all that they can be for Him.

A Scripture which comes to mind that speaks to who we are as Christians and who we are as a Christian Church is 1 Peter 2: 9–10. “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

How transforming it would be if all of our churches understood that this is who we are. We are the chosen ones. Chosen by

God to be His spokesman and to do His work. To tell others what a difference He has made in our lives, and what a difference He could make in their lives as well. It is a lot to live up to, “a chosen people a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God,” but if we accept that high calling, I am convinced that we could have the impact on the world that Christ has called us to have.

Transition times are critical times in the life of the church, but they are not the only time we should be reevaluating. How is your church doing with this? Are you focusing on what Christ has called you to be? Or are you continually making plans for the next thing you can do? It’s a question that we need to keep asking ourselves, so that we keep our eyes on Him.

Yours in Christ,
Terry



The Blessing of Finished Work

by Brian Tidd, Pastor of Big Rock Congregational Church, Atlanta, Michigan

Please read Genesis 1:26–2:3; John 17:4; and John 19:30.

Man tends to see work as a curse. But work is a blessing because God Himself worked and works. Because of the finished work of Christ we may rest on His blood which takes away all our sins.

When God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, created the heavens and earth, He worked. This fact sets Judaism and Christianity apart from others where nobility would not lower themselves to work. To them, work is for the lower classes.

Our God is a working God. He sets out to accomplish a task and to form and fill the earth. Over a period of six evening-and-morning days, He gets it done very well. It is so well done that the work is finished. He did not need to nor could He do more work and make it more perfect. God’s finished work is the basis for the holiness of our work and our rest.

Had God not worked, work would be an unholy necessity for grubby little mortals. But as it is, since the Almighty worked, we are not like bugs and beasts when we work, we are like God Almighty. He created by work. We create by working. In that way we reflect and imitate God.

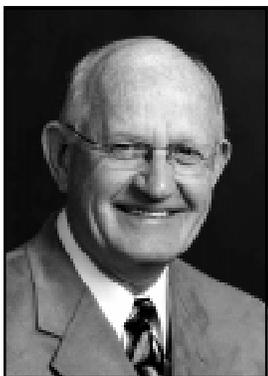
If you have ever sat back and reflected upon a job well done, then that is a godly moment. It is just like what God did. If you ever stopped to celebrate a major accomplishment, then you had a godly celebration. God did that on the seventh day (which continues to this day — Hebrews 4:1–10).

Even if a person has no need to work because his or her bank account holds more than enough money to live out their days in ease, godliness demands that they work. Their bank account frees them, not from the need to work, but from the need to make a wage. The need to work comes from the need for godliness. To equate the need to work with the need for money is to make money a true necessity while godliness is just a nicety. It reveals an idolatry of money. And Jesus said, “You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matthew 6:24) The Bible associates wages with work. (Romans 4:4) And we must now not only work but also do toilsome labor in order to eat. (Genesis 3:17) Work is a blessing; but toilsome labor, slaving like a donkey and grinding away like a machine, is a curse. The first basis for work was not the need to eat, but the need to be like God. When Adam was put in the garden, all he had to do to eat was pick fruit from trees planted by God. Working imitated God by cultivating and extending the garden. We work to glorify God — to magnify Him to the world.

Christ finished the greatest work and glorified God most when he finished His work on the cross, saying, “It is finished.” As the saying goes, “There is no such thing as a free lunch.” We receive God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense—G.R.A.C.E. God treats us with kindness we do not deserve because Christ finished His work and earned that kindness to give as He pleases to anyone. Think about the great work of Christ. Our lives rest upon it.

We are sent...

Dr. Ron Hamilton, CCCC Director of Church Multiplication



The Great Commission is expressed in different ways in the New Testament. The simplest and most straightforward expression is found in John 20 when Jesus meets his disciples after the resurrection and says, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (John 20:21)

We can understand how we are sent as we read about Jesus’ mission in John 1. As we read this we understand that we are sent...

- With eternal truth — Jesus is the eternal Word of God, and all things were made by him. We are called to bring eternal truth to a world that needs to hear it and is in darkness without it.
- In the flesh — The Word became flesh and lived among us. In a similar way, he calls us to live missionally, and establish churches that bring the truth of Christ to cities and neighborhoods where there is no witness to the truth.

- To the people of God — Our mission is a body-building exercise to establish churches all over our nation. We need about 3,000 new churches each year to keep up with churches that are closing, and to meet the needs of a growing and changing population.
- For a broken world — Everyone who receives the Lord Jesus by faith becomes a child of God. Our mission is to develop new churches that make extraordinary followers of Jesus who live in the truth and share the good news with others. Many people are coming to faith through the ministry of the new churches planted by the CCCC.
- With compassion and conviction — Jesus came in “grace and truth.” People came to him because he touched the lives of needy and broken people as he spoke life-changing truth to his generation. I am encouraged that our newly planted churches are committed to do works of mercy in their communities. I have personally observed that all of our church planters are great preachers and faithful teachers of the Word of God.

A Tale of Two Churches

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

It was a shocking revelation. I guess my colleagues were naïve — but I would have been just as surprised. A team from the church had ventured out into the community to do servant evangelism ministry — ministering to people for no other reason than to demonstrate the love of Jesus. During that time they met a woman we’ll call Helen.

Helen was a widow, a frail woman who had been caring for her adult, mentally-handicapped son for many years all by herself. They lived in a trailer community — an eclectic mix of people who obviously took pride in their modest homes sprinkled over what used to be a bean field just a few miles south of the church. Helen was polite, but clearly suspicious of these “church people” and their offer of service (I think they were raking leaves). As her story unfolded, our team found out why.

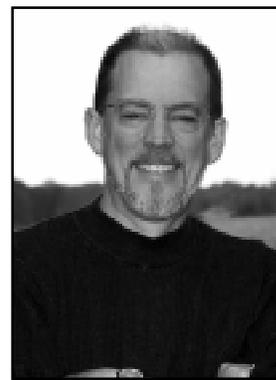
Several years previous, Helen and her son had visited another church — one that was literally only a few blocks from their community. They had welcomed her at first, but it became quickly evident that the welcome was only a “nicety.” Her son, who loved music, became very gleeful when the hymns began — and was considered a “disruption.” After only a short season at that church, Helen had been “politely” invited to leave. What’s worse, after her departure, the village around the church was abuzz with whispers about how difficult it had been to have Helen and her son in the church. “She should have known better than to try to bring him to Sunday services.”

I expect that, as you read this, you are appalled — at least you should be. But I wonder how many other churches — in

our own communities — have done something similar. Someone doesn’t dress right. Someone has a “past.” Someone is from a family that offended people years ago — “We certainly don’t want them in our church!” Churches are too often guilty of breaking a cardinal rule of gospel ministry: we show favoritism.

James writes, “My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here is a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?” (James 2:1–4)

The gospel is for everyone. We cannot avoid taking the love and good news of Jesus Christ to someone just because they are challenging or downright unlovely. And it is equally important to welcome them into the family. Who are the “Helens” in your community? If you’re not doing it already, maybe it’s time to find out their stories and demonstrate to them the authentic, life-changing love of Jesus. Raking some leaves might just lead to someone meeting the Savior for the very first time.



Samuel J. Mills, Jr.

The name of Samuel J. Mills, Jr. is not well known today, but he played a key role in the birth of the foreign missions movement in America. The organizing and promotion of missions he did as a college and seminary student was the inspiration behind the first group of Americans who committed themselves to missionary service overseas. The petition that he and three of his friends presented to the Massachusetts (Congregational) General Association in 1810 resulted in the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the first U.S. mission society.

Samuel J. Mills, Jr. was born in 1783, the son of a pastor. He came by an interest in missions naturally. His father, Samuel Mills, Sr., was pastor of the Congregational Church in Torrington, Connecticut and one of a group of missionary pastors sent out for temporary service on the western frontier in 1793 by the Connecticut General Association of Congregational Ministers.

Young Samuel enrolled at Williams College in western Massachusetts in the spring of 1806. He had already committed himself to Christian ministry and to the cause of world evangelism. He did not excel in his studies, apparently because his preoccupation with the cause of missions prevented him from truly devoting himself to academic work.

He found other like-minded students at Williams, and they engaged in earnest discussion and prayer about the spiritual needs of the unreached parts of the world. On a hot August afternoon in 1806, Mills and four friends were in a meadow north of the college, discussing the needs of the lost in Asia. They were so engrossed in this conversation that they failed to notice an approaching thunderstorm. As the storm was coming upon them, they scrambled into the first available shelter — a haystack. There they joined in prayer, and debated the feasibility of going to Asia. After they sang a hymn, Mills cried out, “We can do this, if we will!” It was a

moment of spiritual breakthrough, and all five consecrated themselves to missionary service. This “Haystack Prayer Meeting” has become famous in history. Large scale observances of its bicentennial were held in 2006.

In 1808 Mills and his friends at Williams organized a “Society of Brethren” to pursue their investigation of mission possibilities and strengthen their personal missionary commitment. This organization was kept secret because the idea of going to the “uncivilized” world to spread the gospel was considered so novel and radical that their plans, if known, were likely to be met with scorn and opposition.

After graduating from Williams in 1809, Mills did some post-graduate study (and cultivation of missionary interest) at Yale, and then enrolled at Andover Seminary. It was in 1810, while Mills was a student at Andover, that he and his friends made their presentation to the Massachusetts General Association that resulted in the first American mission board.

He was licensed to preach in 1812, then did home missions work in the American South, traveling as far as New Orleans. Seeing frontier conditions impressed him with the need to make the Scriptures more widely available, and led to his

involvement in the formation of the American Bible Society in 1816.

In 1818 he sailed to West Africa on behalf of the American Colonization Society (an early

Abolitionist group), seeking sites where freed slaves returning to Africa might settle. He spent a fruitful two months of exploration, but suddenly became ill on the voyage home. He died on June 16, 1818, and was buried at sea.

Christian historian Kenneth Scott Latourette has written that Mills “more than any other man was responsible for the beginning of foreign missions from the United States.” (Christianity in a Revolutionary Age, Vol. III, p. 28)

No portrait of him is known to exist.

Mills ...more than any other man was responsible for the beginning of foreign missions from the United States.

Addendum to D.L. Moody Bio.: In my attempt to condense the rich and full life of D.L. Moody into a brief article, I omitted reference to two great Christian organizations in Chicago which perpetuate his name, the Moody Memorial Church and the Moody Bible Institute. Moody organized the Illinois Street Church in 1863, and raised funds for its reconstruction as the Chicago Avenue Church after the Chicago Fire of 1871. In 1889, though he was no longer living in Chicago, he organized a Bible Institute there during a visit of several months. Ten years after his death, both institutions were renamed in his honor. — Alwyn York, Conference Historian

CCCC 60th Annual Family Conference Report

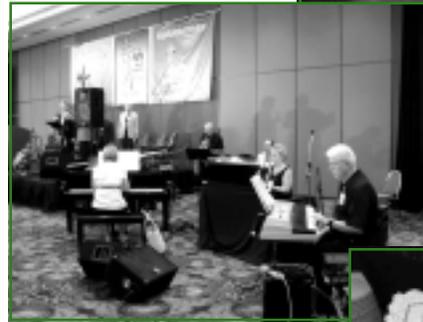
Our Conference met in Buffalo, New York July 21–24 for our 60th Annual Family Conference. Evening messages were brought by Conference Minister Stephen Gammon, Director of Church Multiplication Ron Hamilton, Director of Church Redevelopment John Kimball and Conference President Nick Granitsas.



Niagara Falls



Steve Gammon & John Kimball



Praise Team



Mark Dever & Jill Kelly



60th Anniversary



Our morning Bible Hour speaker was Dr. Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC. All messages are available at the Conference web site www.cccusa.com for download.

The Conference theme was “Connected in Christ — In Him Joined Together.” Fellowship, music, teaching, preaching and seminars emphasized our unity in Christ.

Appointments were announced, a budget was passed and all ministries of the Conference gave their reports. A Capital Funds Campaign was announced and explained. Larry Wood was elected Conference President for the next three years. And we were officially invited to Waterloo, Iowa for the 61st Annual Family Conference, July 20–23, 2009.



Children's Choir & Children's Ministry



Youth Ministry

Tech Tips

Churches and organizations often produce printed materials which indicate that the writers think of the computer as a fancy typewriter. While that mentality may come to us naturally, it cannot produce quality printing.

The computer is not a typewriter — it is a typesetting machine. What we learned in typing class was a series of substitutes because of the limitations of the typewriter. Hundreds of years of professional typesetting created effective ways of communicating via the printed page, the tools for which are now available with today's computer software and printers.

The use of double spaces after sentences, underlines anywhere, hyphens instead of dashes, or typewriter quotes and apostrophes are indications that the writer has not yet learned the difference. Avail yourself of information to make your printed communication more professional and more effective. Read the *Newsletter Newsletter* or look up typesetting conventions on the Internet to improve your church's image in print. Or e-mail the editor for a help article.

Teddie Techie

Mark Your Calendar Now

CCCC 61st

Annual Family Conference

July 20–23, 2009

Waterloo, Iowa

Changes and Opportunities

Pastoral Changes:

Sierra Madre CA	Sierra Madre Congregational Church	Paul Beck
Georgetown MA	Byfield Parish Church (UCC) (Associate)	Daniel Ledwith*
Nottingham NH	Nottingham Christian Congregational Church*	Jonathan Colegrove*

Pastoral Openings:

Longmont CO	Christ Congregational Church*
Garnet IA	Zion Congregational 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
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
Kennedy NY	Clarks Corners Community Church*
Beloit WI	Shopiere Congregational Church

* = Conference member

Health Tips

Stroke or Seizure?

A stroke occurs when the brain's blood supply carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain is blocked by a clot or a blood vessel ruptures. A person having a stroke will have absence of activity (e.g., sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg most noticeable on one side of the body).

A seizure occurs when there is a brief but strong surge of electrical activity in the brain. A person experiencing a seizure will have increased activity (e.g., convulsions, muscles spasm even loss of consciousness).

If you see someone having any of these symptoms **Call 9-1-1 immediately**. Allow the professional staff of the ambulance and the emergency room to evaluate the neurological status and begin proper treatment. Time is critical to save brain cells during a stroke or determine if a seizure has occurred.

Source: *Heart*, May 2008

Food Safety

Detecting salmonella is difficult since you cannot smell, taste or see it. Always cook meat, poultry and eggs to the proper temperature for the proper length of time. Wash all produce with cold running water and a scrub brush. Use soap and water to wash your hands before handling food and after contact with pet feces, using the bathroom or changing a diaper. Cutting boards, counters and utensils need to be washed after use. Avoid contact of raw meat with fresh vegetables. Store sliced fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator.

Source: *Yahoo! News*

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



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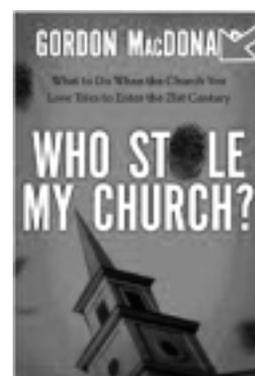
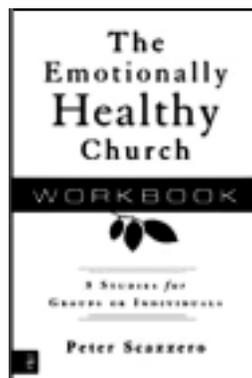
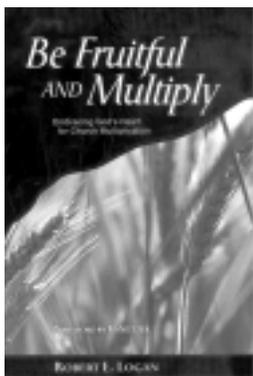
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“Connected in Christ, Changing Communities”

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. Ephesians 2:21



2008 Annual Family Conference - recommendations from our evening speakers

Rev. Dr. Ron Hamilton, Church Multiplication & Rev Dr. John Kimball, Church Redevelopment

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