

## Around The Conference

### Building Unity in the Body of Christ

*From the Pacific Northwest, this month's article was written by Dean Walker, Pastor of our CCCC Garfield Christian Church in Garfield, Washington, who was recently granted standing as a CCCC ordained minister. He has been developing a co-operative ministry with fellow pastors and churches. – Ted Bradshaw, Pacific Northwest Area Minister*

**Psalm 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! See also **Ephesians 4:1-5**



Dean Walker

For years, the Holy Spirit led my wife, Becky and me to seek to unify the believers in our community. As we talked to church leaders about Biblical unity, we were met with hard-hearted resistance. They thought we wanted all believers in one church, or we were starting a church and wanted to steal sheep. Some were apathetic to Biblical unity. Others acted as if we were speaking heresy.

I began to understand that pride, one of Satan's tools of deception, was causing the division. People were hanging on to a hurt and there was no desire to build a united front to battle the enemy. Becky and I began to pray specifically and without ceasing about Biblical unity. We

modeled working together, seeking God, and evangelizing our community. I learned how to speak words of unity by allowing the Spirit of unity to rule my life.

We invited all the churches to our monthly potluck and to our special services. Other pastors helped me with the service, especially the communion service. We encouraged our members to go as a church to the other churches' potlucks and special services. Each year Becky and I serve a dinner open to anyone from the community. This blossomed into feeding all believers in Christ Jesus once a year.

We talked with other churches about service to Jesus and letting our denominations strengthen us instead of separating us. Three years ago, several churches began one of the largest outreach events the churches had ever done. Together, we put on a community-wide Christmas Dinner. Annually, we now feed a complete turkey dinner to an average of 250.

The excitement is indescribable! A heart of unity within diversity is blossoming, and it has taken us to the river of living water where all of us are drinking together. This past summer an Assembly of God pastor, a United Methodist pastor, and I led a community-wide church service in our city park. Five churches closed their doors and came. There three shepherds shared their hearts on binding together as a community, and seeing Jesus as Lord of our lives drawing us into working, eating, and ministering together — loving each other as Christ Jesus loves us.

Bold in building Biblical unity, we have seen great strides in understanding that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Unity. Opposition still exists, and there is work to do. Believers were severely hurt 32 years ago and many are unwilling to let go of their

hurts. We continue to promote what Paul wrote in Ephesians, *I... beseech you to walk worthy of the calling... endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Our next step is to build a culture of peace through the Peacemakers Ministries. Please join us in prayer to see God working as we submit to His direction.



Garfield Christian Church

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## Trusting God in the Surprises of Life

Rev. Dr. Stephen Gammon, CCCC Conference Minister



Jesus Christ IS Lord of all! He is King of the universe, Head of the Church, Lord of the CCCC, and Lord of my life! The Bible says (Philippians 2:9–11) one day every knee will bow before Him, confessing His Lordship! But we are not going to wait for a future day, we will serve Him NOW! We testify with the words of the worship song, “Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly serve Him now.”

One August night 35 years ago I came face to face with Jesus. He revealed His Lordship to me and mercifully called me to yield to Him. By His grace I responded, “Yes, Lord!” To express my commitment that night I

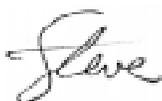
sang a hymn to Him that has been a theme song for me ever since: *“It may not be on the mountain height, or over the stormy sea. It may not be at the battle front my Lord will have need of me. But if by a still small voice he calls to paths I do not know, I’ll answer dear Lord with my hand in thine, I’ll go where you want me to go. I’ll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, o’er mountain or plain or sea. I’ll say what you want me to say, dear Lord. I’ll be what you want me to be.”*

I love the fact that the Lord directs our steps. That is what we trust Him to do, and what He will do. Through the years He has led our Conference, He is leading us now, and He will in the years ahead. He looks for a people who will listen for and receive orders from Him, then carry them out together. Our responsibility as believers, as churches, and as a Conference is to trust and obey Him. Through His Word He has given clear instructions, including loving God, loving others, and making disciples as we go. Surprises may come in our lives, but God always shows Himself faithful!

At our recent Annual Family Conference I shared a surprise. Just two days before I traveled to Waterloo, Iowa for CCCC Board meetings that preceded our annual meeting I was notified by phone that I was again being recalled to active duty in the United States Navy. I received the actual orders electronically only two hours before the Annual Meeting officially began. I was ordered to report on August 28 for processing, then following some training and preparations, to depart on or about September 24 for seven months of service with Naval Central Forces Command in Kuwait as the Warrior Transition Team Chaplain, ministering to troops coming and going to Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the region.

I love the fact that in Christ none of us are solo players, but our Lord puts us on teams. The CCCC has a great leadership team. Our Board of Directors has agreed on an interim plan, appointing Dr. Ron Hamilton acting Conference Minister while I am away. I have much confidence in Ron and I know you will join me in praying often for him, just as so many have done for me. Pray also for John Kimball and Terry Shanahan, as well as for Tay Kersey, Diane Johnson, and Gayle Brimmer. They are your servants for Christ’s sake! Pray also for my wife Helen and for our family, and for all our troops and their families, as they sacrifice so much. While I am away, I will continue in prayer for my CCCC family, whom I love and treasure. I look forward to seeing many of you again in future days, when we will recount to one another once again how faithful is our God!

Your brother in the Lord’s service,  
Steve Gammon



## THE FORESEE

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Deadline for the October 2009 issue is August 20, 2009.

Mark your  
calendar  
NOW for next  
year.

CCCC  
62nd Annual  
Family  
Conference

July 26–29, 2010  
in Springfield,  
Massachusetts

## God is on the Move in Rhode Island

Rev. Terry H. Shanahan, Northeast Regional Minister

At our 2008 Annual Family Conference in Buffalo, we took into the conference our first Evangelical Anglican Church. The Church of the Apostles in Coventry, Rhode Island paid a great price in leaving their Episcopal denomination. Their priest was defrocked for standing on Biblical principals, they lost all of their previous denominational ties to fellowship, and they spent a half a million dollars to purchase back their building. They stepped out in faith so they could be free to worship in spirit and in truth, and they have joined our Conference to be in fellowship with like-minded believers who are connected in Christ and changing their communities.

Since becoming an autonomous church their fellowship has grown and their giving has increased. I was blessed to be invited to bring greetings from the Conference as they recently celebrated their third anniversary as an autonomous church under the headship of Christ. These folks have an amazing story of faithfulness in the face of strong opposition. Their testimony speaks of a discipleship where great sacrifice is involved. Their witness is one of grace — not at all a cheap grace, but a grace that acknowledges that the God of the universe sent His only Son to die on a cross for them. A grace that was purchased with the



*Church of the Apostles*

blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Their acceptance of Christ's sacrifice would allow them to do no other than to be reborn as an evangelical church that worships in the Anglican tradition. They have organized themselves with a congregational polity and have installed elders and deacons to help guide and serve them.



In my comments to them I spoke of the rebirth the church had gone through. With birth there are labor pains, which I know they have experienced. With birth there is often a high level of anxiety which has to be worked through. With birth there is a huge adjustment to change, but with birth comes new life. The Church of the Apostles has experienced new life indeed. Worship is vibrant, hearts have been opened, hands are prepared to serve and to give, and there is an urgent, genuine concern for the lost.

God is on the move in Rhode Island and around the Conference, and He has blessed those churches that are being reborn (redeveloped) to serve Him.

## 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Family Conference Notes

Hundreds of CCCC members, church delegates, pastors and families attended the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Family Meeting July 20–23 in Waterloo, Iowa.

A few items worthy of note:

- On Monday evening Conference Minister Dr. Stephen Gammon announced his call to active duty in the U.S. Navy beginning August 28. For further details see his column on page 2 of this issue.
- On Tuesday and Wednesday evenings Rev. David T. Olson challenged our thinking for the need for church multiplication and redevelopment. He pointed out from this research that just to keep up with population increase, twice as many churches need to be started as are now being started. The CCCC is to be commended for our recent emphasis on church planting.
- A five-year plan, "*SHARING HIS VISION, More Than We Can Imagine!*" was announced. This was approved at our last meeting, and is now being developed. Through the plan we will raise \$5.1 million to maximize the

ministry of the CCCC through transformation of conference giving; expansion of staff to increase CCCC missional ministry; and establishment of the "*Life Changing Churches*" fund.

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings at our Morning Bible Hour, Dr. Stuart Briscoe challenged us from Ephesians 4:11–16, enlivening our theme, "Cooperating for Christ: The whole body joined and held together, built up in love, as each part does its work."
- More than a dozen new churches were welcomed to the CCCC, many new ministerial standings announced, a budget was adopted, and reports of good news were given by many committees.
- On Thursday evening the Conference choir sang and Conference President Larry Wood spoke on letting God use us in surprising ways and led our communion service.
- Effective children's and youth ministries were active throughout the conference.

# Scenes from our Annual Conference in Waterloo, Iowa



"If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it."  
Abraham Lincoln  
The "Stanzas of the" Speech

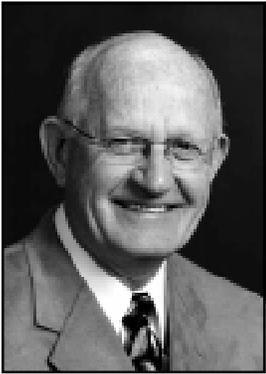
In addition, we challenge you as "Committed in Christ... Changing Communities." As the following, we are committed to share this as we grow in love and grace with a broken world. We are passionately committed to do what Jesus taught us to do and includes it here for us to understand.

LOVE  
at Every Point  
WORK

The Whole BODY  
...is made  
...together  
...built up in  
LOVE,  
at Every Point!  
Does it  
WORK.

## Catching up With World Christians...

Dr. Ron Hamilton, CCCC Director of Church Multiplication



In his book, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, David Hesselgrave says,

*The primary mission of the Church and, therefore, of the churches is to proclaim the gospel of Christ and gather believers into local churches where they can be built up in the faith and made effective in service, thereby planting new congregations throughout the world.*

In 2006, the [Joshua Project](#) officially became a ministry of the U.S. Center for World Mission. The Joshua Project attempted to provide a clear goal of pioneer church-planting among the largest groups of unreached peoples. Most mission agencies have focused on church planting as the primary means of reaching unreached people groups with the gospel. Church planting work is thriving in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Bob Roberts, Jr. says in *The Multiplying Church*, “The Chinese, the Brazilians, the Filipinos, the Indonesians, the Mexicans — all are now sending their own missionaries and engaging the world.”

In contrast, church planting in the United States is happening at a snail’s pace in comparison with the rest of the world. It is true that nearly 4,000 churches were started per year in the U.S. from 2000–2005. Yet, David T. Olson says in *The American Church In Crisis*, “The net gain in churches in those years was 303 per year... there needs to be a yearly gain of 3,205 churches to keep up with American population growth.”

This means that we need to double our efforts in church planting to keep pace.

Generally speaking, the American church has become institutional, while the world church is missional. The focus of ministry in the American church is to those within the walls, while world Christians are focusing on the not yet convinced. Worship in churches in America is predictable while worship in churches across the world is dynamic and alive. American Christians are satisfied with outreach through addition while world Christians are focused on multiplication.

We are prayerfully committed to restoring a multiplication mindset to pastors and churches in the Conference. God is using church planting ministries to reach millions of people around the world. It’s time for the American Christians to join brothers and sisters around the world by joining in this church multiplication movement.

## Spiritual Maturity and Character

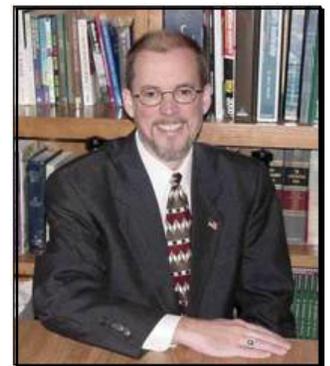
Dr. John Kimball, CCCC Director of Conference Care and Church Redevelopment

Not long ago, I wrote an article about “spiritual leadership” — noting that many times God’s criteria for church leaders and ours don’t match. And when a church uses worldly criteria to select leaders, problems will always follow. Based upon the response to that piece, I’d like to flesh out the idea a little further.

As Paul writes in his first letter to Timothy, there are very specific traits for which a congregation should look when choosing elders, deacons, consistory members and the like (see 1 Timothy 3:1–13). Note that Paul’s list is concerned not with skill or influence, but with spiritual maturity and character. In fact, the only skill listed is the ability to teach (v. 2). I will not analyze the components of this list here, but suffice it to say that spiritual maturity and character count! If there will be a problem in a leader’s life or because of his or her leadership, it will rarely (if ever) be because they lacked a particular skill or aptitude. But woe to the congregation that does not test a leader’s spiritual depth and character before giving them spiritual authority!

Spiritual maturity in leadership is critical because one cannot guide from or invest in others something he does not have

himself. When a leader cannot “keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience,” he or she either disregards such truths or violates them (conscience). In either case, that leader is missing the foundation needed to guide and admonish Christ’s flock. Further, that same leader is set up for incredible hypocrisy when espousing truth he or she is violating. One of the main directives of Christ’s church is to disciple men, women and children toward an ever deepening, fully abiding, daily walk with Christ. Such spiritual growth can only be led by men and women who already have such a walk with the Savior. And when the church takes the time to review the life and ministry of such leaders (vv. 2, 10 and 13), the level of spiritual maturity will be clear. Bottom line? If a person shows little or no evidence of spiritual depth and maturity, he or she is simply not a candidate for local church leadership.



*(continued on next page)*

Character is important as well. One's character is indicated by his or her attitude, fidelity, anger fuse, peaceable nature and trustworthiness, among other things. A Christ-like attitude is one of self-sacrifice and love (Philippians 2). Fidelity is seen in the little things as well as the big, and is directly related to one's willing and mutual submission to one another under the lordship of Christ (Ephesians 5). One's anger response is seen clearly in how he responds to negative and challenging circumstances — and be sure to watch out for those who display their anger through a caustic tongue! (Ephesians 4:29–32; James 3). Strong Christ-like character breeds peace in one's own life and in the life of others (Romans 12:14–18; James 3:17–18). Trustworthiness is also

an essential trait for church leaders, for members will not follow those they do not trust or respect (1 Corinthians 4:1–2; 1 Timothy 3:2, 8). Again, if a person has immature or flawed character, they are not a leadership candidate. Spiritual maturity and the building of character are primary goals of Christian discipleship. Discipleship is far more than teaching *about* Jesus and the Christian Faith — it is to be transformational to the inner man. The kind of local church leaders we are describing are not elected — they are *reared*. This is why any church revitalization work must include both discipleship and leadership if it is to be successful. If you would like more information on the work we are doing in this area, contact John Kimball at (651) 739-1474.

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## The Impossible Project

The First Congregational Church of Pittston, Maine, is a small church located on the Arnold Road, nestled in the trees along the Kennebec River. Pittston is a small community of a few thousand people. Since it was established in 1812, the church has played an important role in the history and the fellowship

uncomfortable for most churchgoers. Many seats were broken, injuring people, especially children. Many nylons and other clothing items were ruined. Several people left the church because of this problem.

The members prayed for new pews; however, it seemed like an impossible dream. We did fund raising, but the cost of the pews went up each year with inflation, and we just could not earn enough money to make the project a reality. Finally, we decided to reach out for help from outside sources. Everyone prayed about the project and I wrote several grant requests.

With the help of [Cornerstone Corps](#) and two other grants, our dream became a reality. We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is no impossible dream when God has a hand in it.



*Pittston Church New Pews*

of the people of Pittston. It is located right next to the Colburn house, a historic house where Benedict Arnold slept. This is situated on the historic Arnold trail, which hosts many visitors to our great state.

As well as providing a strong spiritual foundation, the church plays an important role in uniting the community, serving the poor, and providing a place of gathering for residents. It also provides space for local AA groups. The church is actively involved in the local food pantry as well as providing help to local residents with heating their homes, repairing their cars, and providing clothing and other items to help the needy in our town.

As does everything, as the years went on, the building showed increasing signs of its age. The late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century theater seats were in extreme disrepair. They were set in cast iron framing, which left no room between seats. The seats themselves were very narrow and extremely



*Pittston Church New Choir Chairs*

The plaster on the walls has been repaired and the sanctuary has been repaired and repainted. There is sturdy new carpet on which our lovely pews stand. The photos show what a lovely transformation has occurred in our church. We will be hosting a celebratory service on October 17. We are inviting all members of the community and hope to see many past members return to Church, strengthening the Kingdom of God.





Conservative  
Congregational  
Christian  
Conference

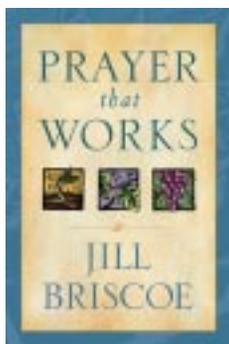
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**THE FORESEE**

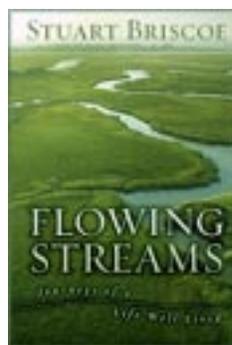
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## **Best Selling Books From Stuart & Jill Briscoe** **From This Year's 2009 Annual Family Conference "Cooperating for Christ"**

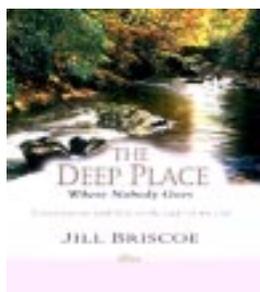
*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. Ephesians 4:16*



*Prayer That Works*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
List Price: \$11.99  
Through studying the lives of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17-19 and parts of 2 Kings), readers will be challenged to pray bold prayers rather than settle for meek prayers.



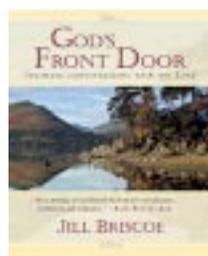
*Flowing Streams  
Journeys of a Life Well Lived*  
Author: Stuart Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover, Jacketed  
List Price: \$16.99  
Flowing Streams is sage. It is poignant. It is Stuart Briscoe's legacy.



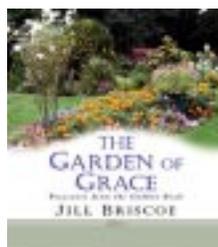
*The Deep Place Where Nobody Goes*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover  
Price: \$13.99  
This collection of short stories, reflections, and poems from Jill Briscoe centers on the theme of our relationship with God, and how that relationship must be our daily priority in good times and bad.



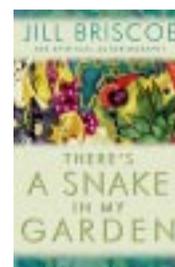
*Faith Enough to Finish*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover  
Price: \$12.99



*God's Front Door*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover  
Price: \$13.99



*The Garden of Grace*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover  
Price: \$13.99



*There's a Snake in My Garden*  
Author: Jill Briscoe  
Binding: Hardcover  
Price: \$12.99

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