

## ***Around the Conference*** ***Turning a Church Inside Out***

by Dan Morton, Southwest Area Representative

When Barbie and I arrived at our present church, attendance had dwindled down to seventeen faithful. The economy of this community is based on copper mining, and like a balloon, inflates when business is booming and just as quickly deflates when the prices fall. The attitude of this seventeen was one of shutting the doors and closing the church because it seemed to them that the Spirit had passed them by.

Shortly after our arrival, we began serving the community as chaplains at the fire department. For more than fifteen years we have introduced residents to God at a time of disaster, and many have renewed their faith. We also discovered that God has a sense of humor. Responding to a call in the middle of the night, we got dressed in the dark and hurried to the scene. When we returned home, Barbie discovered she had her blouse on inside out, but in the dark it made little difference.

In the days and weeks following September 11, 2001, many counselors across this nation reported a phenomenon not seen since World War II. Patients were cancelling doctor appointments as they began to look at the troubles others were having and quit concentrating on their own.

Then we realized that God had just sent us a message. What had happened in 2001 was that lives were turned inside out. Now we could do the same with our congregation. Ina Duley Ogdon wrote,

“Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do,  
Do not wait to shed your light afar,  
To the many duties ever near you now be true,  
Brighten the corner where you are.”

The first Sunday of each month is “loose change” Sunday. People are now saving up their loose change during the month and bringing “handfuls on purpose” to put in the offering plates. Each month there is a different cause which we are able to

help in a financial way, and it brings to light the many opportunities for service within the community.

Recipients have been the local food bank; the Boys and Girls Club; the shelter for abused women and children; Arizona Reservation Ministries, which serves to introduce young Apaches to Jesus Christ; and the Humane Society, to name a few. Not only do they receive the financial aid, but many of the congregation have chosen to serve as volunteers with these organizations.

By turning the church “inside out” it truly has become a community church, and in turn is supported by the community. Whenever we have a special dinner, more than half those attending are from the Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal, Catholic, Presbyterian, and other churches. It truly becomes an ecumenical moment. As pastors, our motivating force has always been, “To God be the glory! Great things He has done...” and is doing.

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## ***Annual Family Conference Learns to Be Quick on Its Feet***

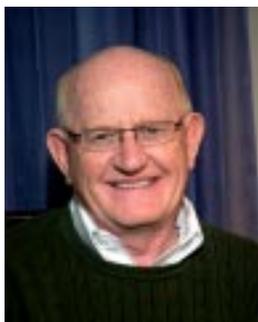
Our recent CCCC Annual Family Conference was informed four days before the start of the Conference that they would have to find another place to hold it, as the air conditioning at the Crowne Plaza was down. In a little over 24 hours our leaders had secured the Signature of Solon for the meetings and Bertram Inn and the Clarion Hotel, in the Cleveland suburban area for lodging. More details and comments may be found in the articles by Conference Minister Ron Hamilton on page 2 and Northeast Regional Minister Terry Shanahan on page 3.

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## God Works For Good In All Things

by Rev. Dr. Ron Hamilton, Conference Minister



Many lessons were learned when we were forced to have a change of venue for the 2011 Annual Family Conference in Cleveland on July 25–28.

### July 20

We passed through the Cleveland area on our way to visit family in upstate New York. As we traveled through Aurora, Ohio, we passed the Bertram Inn and Convention Center. My wife Shirley saw the center and said, “That’s a beautiful place. Why don’t we have conference there

sometime?” I responded, “Maybe we will some day!”

### Lesson:

*Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails. (Proverbs 19:21)*

### July 21

I received a call from Don Ehler, CCCC Program Coordinator, informing me that we would not be able to hold the conference at the Crowne Plaza hotel due to the breakdown of the air conditioning system. As we discussed all of the options, including cancelling the meetings, we committed to pray about all of this. I told Don that I would travel to Cleveland early the next day to work on an option for a meeting place. We also agreed to get as many people praying about this as possible.

### Lesson:

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6–8)*

### July 22

After a day of exploring all options, we settled on relocating the annual conference to the Signature of Solon with people staying at the Bertram Inn and the Clarion Hotel.

### Lesson:

*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. (Psalm 23:1)*

### July 24

Don Ehler arrived on the scene at the Signature of Solon. He worked with CCCC office staff members Diane Johnson, Gayle Brimmer, and Tay Kersey to set up for the registration of our conference delegates. The members of the local arrangements committee also assisted Don and the staff at the Signature of Solon to design the use of the space for the annual conference. Things came together in a special way due to the hard work of many.

### Lesson:

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)*

## THE FORESEE

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### July 25–28

The delegates arrived and the annual meeting was held with a few minor adjustments to the schedule. People were inspired by the teaching of the messages, church leaders were encouraged by the seminars, the conference conducted its business with a special unity of purpose and many were strengthened by the fellowship with other members of the Conference.

### Lesson:

*For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD. (Psalm 117:2)*  
The Lord is at work in the CCCC in exciting ways in these days. The events surrounding the 2011 annual conference remind us that *God works for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

## ***They Came, They Saw, They Adapted***

by Rev. Terry H. Shanahan, Northeast Regional Minister

*He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. (Luke 10:1-3)*

By now everyone has heard how this year's CCCC Annual Family Conference became a challenge when we lost our venue just days before it began. That challenge became a blessing from God, as people of faith adapted to all the changes. There were many divine appointments, many testimonies, many God moments as it were, that would have never occurred if we all had not been thrown into the situation together. The new convention facility itself, situated on a pristine golf course, was certainly an upgrade for us, and the staff couldn't have been more accommodating.

Some of the stories that came from our exhibitors were amazing as well. All of their displays were first shipped to the Crowne Plaza and had to be transported to the Signature of Solon Convention Facility. One of our exhibitors, Fred Kress, National Director of Evangelism Explosion, was not even that fortunate, as the Cleveland Airport misplaced his display. Did that stop Fred? No indeed. He set up a table, and with the brochures he did have with him, explained his ministries' mission and was a blessing to us all. I knew that Evangelism Explosion had been doing seminars around the Northeast at some of our CCCC churches. But at this Conference I was given amazing testimonies from two of our pastors about the fruit of those seminars at their churches and the effectiveness of the Evangelism Explosion training.

Dr. William Broderick, pastor of Second Congregational Church in East Douglass, Massachusetts, writes in part, "This [Evangelism Explosion] training has allowed me to 'situationally' explain the Gospel with total clarity to all visitors and all members." I found many people who I thought knew the Gospel were actually confused. I found the Sunday school teachers sharing a faith they did not understand. One of the things I truly appreciate about EE International is the diversity in its materials. I used my adult training with my leadership, and what I learned through Kids' EE with the Sunday school teachers. However, the greatest blessing for me, was watching a person I led to faith in Christ (through the power of the Holy Spirit) now witnessing to others.

Revitalization begins and is maintained through the doctrine of justification (the Gospel). It must be preached from the pulpit, but it also must be reinforced and encouraged. I was called to not just preach but to "equip the saints for ministry."



Another of our pastors, Bob McKinney of Goffstown, New Hampshire, shared with me over lunch the blessing of the one-day Evangelism Explosion seminar that was held at his church. Close to 30 people were in attendance. Some came to faith that day, but many more learned to share their faith in a way they never had before.

Then he explained how God took over and did an amazing thing in their community. The town of Goffstown was holding its annual Old Home Days where the entire town comes out for a summer celebration. The church asked to have a booth at that event and was granted permission by the powers that be. The newly trained Evangelism Explosion congregants manned that booth and were able to clearly articulate the Gospel to the townspeople. Tremendous stories of divine appointments and people coming to a saving faith in Jesus Christ came from that day. It is only through God's timing that those events came so close together that the Holy Spirit could begin a new thing in the town of Goffstown, New Hampshire.

I am convinced that if we are obedient in sharing our faith, God will give us the platform to do so. If you and your church are committed to reaching people for Christ in your community, then hosting an Evangelism Explosion seminar in your church is a wonderful place to start. We are currently talking to some churches in close proximity to one another about joining together in this effort. If you would like to host a training at your church, you can contact Fred Kress, National Director of Evangelism Explosion. [fkress@eeworks.org](mailto:fkress@eeworks.org)

***Conservative Congregational Christian Conference***  
***64th Annual Family Conference***  
***July 16-19, 2012***  
***DoubleTree Hotel***  
***Colorado Springs, Colorado***

## St. Mark's Church gives itself to a startup Philadelphia church

(taken from the Philadelphia Inquirer, October 9, 2010)

Looking back on a long decline from 1,000 active members a century ago to about 20 today, the lay leader of St. Mark's Church in Bustleton understands now why it died.

"We didn't really share well" with outsiders, Curt Welty said.

Set on a grassy campus off Welsh Road, St. Mark's served its close-knit congregation well, Welty said, but "we did not do a good job of getting new people in."

And so, on Sunday, St. Mark's will ring its big bronze bell for the last time and dissolve itself the next day, after 134 years.

But like a supernova that explodes with light just before it dies, St. Mark's will end by sharing itself in an uncommonly generous way: Instead of selling off its chapel, school, parsonage and land, the congregation is giving everything to a start-up church, for free.

"Churches close all the time," marveled the Rev. Ajay Thomas, pastor of little Seven Mile Road Church, which will inherit the property. "Here they are giving us six acres so that the gospel can continue."

Thomas, 29, sees a Christ-like quality to St. Mark's gift. "Jesus gives up his life, but in his death and resurrection we receive new life," he said as he gave a tour of the campus. "That's what we love about this story."

The name of his year-old congregation alludes to the gospel story of Jesus' post-Resurrection encounter with two followers on the road to Emmaus, seven miles outside Jerusalem.

In July, after meeting for about half a year in private homes, Seven Mile Road began holding Sunday services in St. Mark's boxy stone-faced school. It draws about 75 people, most in their 20s and 30s and many with young children.

St. Mark's began life in Kensington in 1876 as the German Evangelical Reformed St. Mark's Church of Philadelphia. It relocated to Bustleton in 1962 after selling its property to St. Christopher's Hospital, which needed the land to expand its parking lot.

A 2008 appraisal of the current property, at 525 Welsh Rd., valued it at \$2 million if sold for residential development, according to Thomas.

"We didn't earn it," he said. "So the only thing we can do is receive it humbly, and with great gratitude."

Culturally, his ethnically diverse church comes off as far hipper than St. Mark's. Seven Mile Road uses guitar instead of organ, boasts a gritty, urban-looking website, and hosts theological debates at a nearby Starbucks.

Welty jokes that "the last time we [St. Mark's] changed our worship was when we went from German to English" nearly a century ago. Although he joined the church in 1989, he remains "one of our newer members" and, at 47, is its second-youngest adult.

Theologically, both congregations are conservative and evangelical. They are affiliated with the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, a 310-church denomination based in Minnesota.

"New churches are typically the most effective way to reach the next generation with the gospel," according to the Rev. Ron Hamilton, the denomination's Conference Minister.

Because new congregations tend to be so dynamic, Hamilton said, his denomination hopes to see by 2020 at least half its member congregations founded in this century. "New churches," he said, "... try things old churches don't do."

Like Thomas, about 60 percent of members are second-generation Indian, many of whom live in the Northeast.

"But we're much more centered on the gospel than on ethnicity," said Thomas, a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston.

The Rev. David Williams, St. Mark's pastor from 2005 to 2009, invited Thomas to visit the church in 2008 when he learned Thomas was looking to plant a congregation in Philadelphia.

"I said, 'How would you like seven acres and three buildings?'" Williams recalled last week. "I was just kidding, but I sensed a possibility."

Since Williams' retirement 16 months ago, Thomas has been preaching the 10 a.m. service at St. Mark's chapel — a converted wood barn — and then strolling across the parking lot at 11 a.m. to preach in the church hall to Seven Mile's flock.

On Sunday morning, he will preside over a joint service of the two congregations, which will be followed by a long supper in the church hall. St. Mark's two previous pastors will participate.

Then, on Monday, St. Mark's will sign title to its property to Seven Mile Road. "It's hard," said Jane Kennedy, 50, a lifelong member of St. Mark's whose parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents were christened, confirmed or married in the parish.

She described St. Mark's as a "tight" congregation "bound by family," but one where a newcomer might not have felt welcome. She said she feels welcome at Seven Mile Road, however, and plans to stay on.



Rev. Ajay Thomas

## Character Counts

by Dr. John Kimball

It had been a particularly challenging week. I was dealing with a difficult situation where we had suspended someone's credentials, and I was now sitting in a seminar learning more about our *LifeFlow* process. The topic was *leadership development*. I remember feeling distracted when my friend and mentor Tom Johnston said, "If a leader is going to 'blow up,' it will nearly always be because of character." We went on to talk about how essential it is to focus on intentionally building Christ-like character in all aspects of discipleship and leadership development. This is so critical!

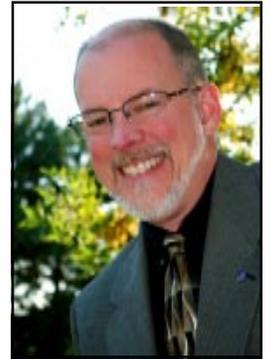
In my tenure as Director of Conference Care for the CCCC, this is the one area that I see neglected over and over as local bodies look to raise up and set apart deacons and elders, and to ordain pastors. I have been a part of several vicinage councils over the years, and only one of these took time to purposely focus on examining the ongoing character of the candidate. In my work with CCCC churches, when there is a lay leader who is causing difficulties, I have yet to see a situation where worldly character is not the main issue. And when a pastor struggles relationally with members of the church, it is common to see a glaring lack in some area of the pastor's Christ-like character.

The discipleship progression we teach in our *LifeFlow* process addresses such things. In the CCCC family, we

tend to be very good at teaching Biblical truth. We understand the essential need of conversion and calling. But as I talk with pastors and laity alike, I find that few of our folks are purposefully working to develop Christ-like character in those they teach and disciple. And when I have pressed the issue, I have been surprised at how many people conclude that they really don't know how to do that. One pastor recently told me, "No one ever did that for me... I really wouldn't know where to start."

The *LifeFlow* training does a beautiful job on this count. But for the purposes of this article, let me just remind you that the character of Christ is seen and taught throughout the New Testament. Paul gives a beautiful summary of it in Galatians 5:22–23 known to us as the Fruit of the Spirit. If we simply begin intentionally observing these nine traits in each other — and lovingly hold one another accountable to them, we are well on our way to building Christ-like character in each other.

There is much more to say on this, but for now I'll just invite you to check out the *LifeFlow* training. If you'd like more information, feel free to contact the CCCC office.



*Gathering of our youth*



*One of many displays*



*Rev. Kenneth Swetland, morning Bible hour speaker*



*Upper hallway and lobby*



*Steve and Helen Gammon*



*Signature of Solon*



*John Hood making announcements*



*Morning Bible Hour crowd*

**Scenes from CCCC 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Conference**



*Children's Choir Thursday Morning*



*George Miller sings at Men's Luncheon*



*Ice cream is enjoyed by all*



*New member church is welcomed*



*Praise team sings*



*Children enjoy learning*

**Cleveland, Ohio, July 25–28, 2011**



*Steve Gammon speaks Monday evening*



*Golf course view from auditorium*



*President Wood conducts business*

## Two-Year Paid Residency for Recent Seminary Graduate

Neighborhood Church of Greenwich Village (NCGV) is offering a two-year paid residency for a recent seminary graduate. NCGV, a member of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, is a Reformed, evangelical church located in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of New York City. We were organized in 1973, and by the grace of God, have maintained a consistent gospel witness in the ensuing years. The duties entailed in the residency involve partnering with both the members and leadership of the congregation to advance the Gospel through the ministries of the church.

For more about the church, go to [www.ncgv.net](http://www.ncgv.net). For full description of responsibilities and opportunities for the residency, [click here](#).

## Promotions to Glory

**Ralph C. Link** — Born April 9, 1929 and died May 4, 2011. He joined the CCCC October of 1991. He was a supply pastor for many years. He was the interim pastor at St. Peter's Reformed Church, Zelienople, Pennsylvania for over three years, interim pastor at Christ Community Church, Fredonia, Pennsylvania for a year. At the time of his death he was a pastoral assistant at a United Presbyterian Church. He is survived by his wife, Shirley.

**Charles F. "Charlie" Cohagen** — born November 21, 1921 and died July 7, 2011. He joined the CCCC April of 1993. He pastored the First Congregational Church, Mattawan, Michigan from 1988 to 1999. His surviving wife, Joanne, said, "He truly enjoyed being a part of this wonderful conference."

## Changes and Opportunities

### Pastoral Changes:

Scotland, SD	United Church of Christ (UCC)	Ron Shifley
Parkersburg, IA	First Congregational Church *	(Associate Pastor) T.J. Hanken
Suffolk, VA	Cypress Chapel Christian Church *	Chris Surber

### Pastoral Openings:

Bethune, CO	Hope Congregational Church *
Brighton, CO	Zion Congregational Church *
Buffalo Center, IA	First Congregational Church *
Rockland, ID	Rockland Congregational Church (Part-time) *
LaMoille, IL	First Congregational Church *
Monroe Center, IL	Union Church of Monroe Center *
Blandford, MA	First Congregational Church *
Chelmsford, MA	Immanuel Church *
Addison, MI	Addison United Church
Inwood, NY	Community Bible Church * (Part-time)
Wellington, OH	Pittsfield Community Church *
Alexandria, PA	Christ Reformed Church *
Russell, PA	Cable Hollow Church
Orwell, VT	First Congregational Church (Ind.) (Part-time)
Barnes, WI	Barnes Community Church (Ind.)

\* = Conference member

+ = In process

## Health Tips

### New Crib Standards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has approved a new crib rule. Beginning June 28, 2011, all cribs manufactured and sold in the US must comply with the new federal safety standards. The new rules apply to full-size and non full-size cribs, prohibit the manufacture or sale of traditional drop side rail cribs, strengthen crib slats and mattress supports, improve the quality of hardware and require more rigorous testing.

After June 28 all cribs sold in the US must meet the new federal requirements. As a result, old cribs may not be given to resale shops, sold on the internet or donated to charities.

This ruling was prompted by the deaths of 30 children in a ten-year span, and a thorough study to determine a safer plan. If you are purchasing a new crib for your child or a grandchild or any infant, be sure to determine if the manufacturer of the crib complies with the federal standard 16CFR1219 for full-size cribs or with federal standard 16CFR1220 for the non-full-size cribs.

You may want to check [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) to be sure your crib has not been recalled. Some manufacturers have immobilizers for their drop side cribs that have been tested and approved by CPSC and can be found on the web site.

If you continue to use a drop-side crib, be sure to check the crib frequently to make sure all of the hardware is secured tightly and there are no loose, missing or broken parts. Stop using the drop side function. Using a portable play yard is another option as long as it has not been previously recalled.

Let's keep our children safe.

Source: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

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

# Christ-like Community

63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Conference

*"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" John 13:15*



**Original matted print from Kim Gardell**

**Now available for the first time –  
From our CCCC Family Conference  
\$30.00 + Shipping**



**Also available the 2011 Conference Tee Shirt  
\$12.00 each + shipping**

**Sizes available – Adult – Small – Med – X Large**

**Free with each Tee shirt purchase – CCCC Cook Book  
While supplies last**

**Sunday School & small group Bible study's, please visit us at  
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**Check out the publication website at  
<http://www.cccusa.com/foresee.html>**



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