



THE FORESEE

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

March/April 2007 Volume 39, No. 2

Around The Conference

Pastoral Prayer — for Pastors

Rev. James P Beesley Jr., Connecticut-Rhode Island Area Representative

One of the greatest blessings of being a part of the CCCC is the quality of fellowship pastors and churches can share together. This sentiment is held by a group that meets regularly in the CT/RI area, comprising Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Every first Thursday morning at 10:00, a group of CCCC (and guest) pastors gathers at First Church, Wethersfield (Michael McDowell, Pastor) to pray and talk over items pertinent to individual ministry or area concerns. We have prayed over serious health issues, major church conflicts, intense personal struggles, and great joys.

Our intention is to grow together as pastors in relationship, and then expand to increase our church relationships. One of our plans for coming months is to seriously talk about moving from being “pastors and churches who pray” to being *praying pastors and churches*. We hope every CCCC pastor has access to a group of people he or she can pray with regularly. It has been a life-saver for many of us.



Connecticut-Rhode Island pastors gather for prayer and fellowship. Left to right: Kate Bartos, Peter Wood, David Goodfellow, Carlton Walker, Timothy Dubeau. Photo by Jim Beesley.

Persistence Pays Off

Rev. Ted Bradshaw, Pacific Northwest Area Representative

Pastor Vince Frank has been Pastor of Ebenezer Congregational Church in Paul, Idaho for nearly 28 years. Vince and Marcia have not only ministered among the people of Ebenezer Congregational Church (CCCC) but also have an effective outreach ministry in a heavily Mormon community.

While reluctant to claim special knowledge, Pastor Frank has three emphases he believes important to promote serving God’s flock.

“First, I encourage pastors to stay longer in their ministries. ... many times pastors leave simply because the ministry grows difficult and we grow weary.” He says that too often ministers see a smaller church as a stepping stone “to a bigger ministry.” Serving Ebenezer for nearly three decades has allowed Vince and Marcia to “share a deep relationship with these precious people. Because of the trust and commitment which that has been established, I believe I can serve them much better.”

Second, he uses the Navigator 2:7 material to draw people into Bible memorization, regular Bible reading, and accountability. The church publishes monthly Bible verses in its Sunday bulletin. “This has really worked in putting at least a few verses in almost everyone’s heart,” states Pastor Frank.

Third, they have persisted in missions. They narrowed missionary giving to two missionary families, whom they support almost in entirety. The church benefits from the missionaries spending more furlough time with them. “Our people truly know and love these families, and pray for specific needs continually. A number of individuals and families are training for, and heading out to, the mission field—God sparked a fire for missions in our church!”

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From the Conference Minister

Hidden Heart Disease

Hidden heart disease can be a silent killer. Because it's not openly visible to others, it's often undetected — yet it's still a danger.

In December I wasn't feeling well, so I had a cardiac stress test. That was the first time I heard the words "heart disease" and "previous heart attack" used to describe me! I didn't like these terms applied to me, and determined to respond minimally — to take the medicine, but change little else.

Three weeks later I was admitted to the hospital

with chest pains. I needed help. An angiogram revealed coronary artery disease, and a significant blockage required intervention. It was a heart attack waiting to happen!

Now that I know this, how foolish I would be to keep living as I was before! Instead, I must now carefully guard what I eat and how much I exercise, take prescribed medications, and aim toward a healthier lifestyle. These revelations about hidden heart disease have given me an opportunity to "repent" of previous choices and to make positive changes. (Thanks to all who have prayed for me! Physically, I am doing very well now!)



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

The Lord reminded me that hidden heart disease is often a spiritual problem in Christians — even in me. Though our focus is often on how things appear outwardly, everything we are and do flows from our inmost being, our hearts. God examines our hearts and desires them to be righteous, reflecting our standing in Jesus Christ.

When we have spiritual heart disease we are often oblivious to it, for the reason Jeremiah gave: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" We need the help of the Lord, our ultimate heart Doctor, who said, "I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind" (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

King David expressed his longing for a personal heart examination in Psalm 139:23-24. He wanted to know the true condition of his spiritual heart, in order to make changes needed to please the Lord. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

As I've been praying this prayer recently, the Lord has brought me to repentance in certain areas. This has led to lifestyle changes toward increased spiritual health. Among these changes will be increased regular and personal accountability with Christian friends —

THE FORESEE
A bi-monthly publication of the
Conservative Congregational Christian
Conference.

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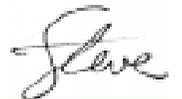
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Deadline for the May/June 2007 issue
is March 10, 2007.

something every Christian needs.

Collectively, the CCCC has a heart after God. But within each of us, and in all of us, there may be some degree of hidden spiritual heart disease. We cannot discern it unless the Lord reveals it to us. So, let's genuinely ask the Lord to search our hearts. Let's pray David's prayer, and — for the Lord's glory and our good — let's repent and make whatever changes the Lord calls us to make.



Conference Offices Relocate, to Be Dedicated

On December 15, 2006 the offices of the Conservative Congregational Conference relocated to Lake Elmo, Minnesota. The Conference address is now 8941 Highway 5, Lake Elmo, MN 55042. The telephone number, 651-739-1474, remains the same. **Please use the new address** for all mailings to the Conference, including newsletters.

The new facility was needed partly due to enlargement of the Conference staff. The facility includes a chapel, conference and workroom areas, and office space for the Conference Minister (Dr. Stephen A. Gammon), Director of Church Multiplication (Dr. Ron Hamilton), Director of Conference Care and Church Redevelopment (Dr. John Kimball), Administrative Assistant and Office Manager (Diane Johnson), and Office Assistant (Gayle Brimmer). The new offices are only about seven miles from the former location in Woodbury, Minnesota.

The new offices will be dedicated in a service on Saturday morning, March 24. Ribbon cutting will take place at 9:00, followed by an open house till 10:45. At 11:00 a.m. there will be a dedication service at St. Lucas Community Church, Lake Elmo, Minnesota, followed by a light luncheon. For more information, please contact the office at 651-739-1474.

Prayer — Spiritual Warfare and Evangelism

Over the last six and a half years that I have been serving as the Northeast Regional Minister, several of my “Carlton’s Comments” articles have dealt with the importance of prayer. I would like to add to that collection with this column.

God intends for prayer to be the lifeline of the individual Christian’s life, and the source of vitality for each congregation’s ministry. Scripture also makes it clear that prayer is the key ingredient of a congregation’s outreach to its community.

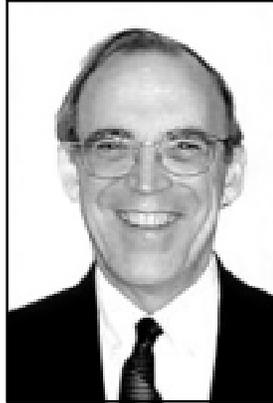
First, when a congregation is actively trying to reach its neighbors for Christ, it will face much spiritual opposition. One thing is certain — the evil one does not want to see a group of Christians effectively presenting the Good News of Christ to non-believers. So he will do whatever he can to bring that kind of ministry to a halt.

The only way to overcome spiritual resistance is specific, earnest prayer by all of God’s people. Jesus addresses this in Mark 9, when the disciples were unable to drive a spirit out of a young man whom it controlled. Teaching the disciples how to deal with the influence of evil, Jesus says, “This kind can come out only by prayer.” We must be fervent pray-ers if we want to be effective in sharing Christ with those who have not yet believed in Him.

The only way to overcome spiritual resistance is specific, earnest prayer by all of God’s people.

Second, prayer can be used as a tool of evangelism. Scripture again points this out in several key passages. In what is called His “High Priestly Prayer,” Jesus says, “I pray also for those who will believe in me through their [Christians’] message” (John 17:20). Here Jesus prays for those who are not yet Christians. Elsewhere, Jesus says believers should pray for those who have mistreated them (Luke 6:28) or even persecuted them (Matthew 5:44). When He hung on the cross close to death, Jesus prayed to His Father to forgive the very people who were carrying out His death (Luke 23:34). Stephen, too, followed our Lord’s example as he was being stoned for his faith in Jesus (Acts 7:60).

This week my wife and I worshiped with the people of Immanuel Community Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.



CCCC pastor John Cunningham shared an example of a church in the Boston area that tried to take seriously the Bible’s examples of praying for non-believers of all stripes. This Boston area congregation went door-to-door in their neighborhood. They introduced themselves to each family, told them what church they represented, and asked if the family had any specific needs the congregation could pray for.

After collecting requests, the church members handed the family a flyer listing the times of services and activities. Then they left. They found this approach to be an unexpected, non-threatening way to make contact with their community. This is an example all our congregations can follow — and it has Biblical support!

Rev. Carlton Walker
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Bryan’s Bytes

Pastor Bryan Burrell,
CCCC Webmaster

Of Wireless Networks and Phishing

Technology is both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is the time saved and the convenience of having information at your fingertips. The downside is the people who try to make your use of technology a challenge. These include spammers, viruses, and spyware — to name a few. In this column I write briefly about two additional challenges.

The first relates to your wireless network. If you don’t change your administrative password from the one that comes with your equipment, you open yourself to a *break-in*. Intruders will try to get a free ride off your high speed connection, and this can also decrease the speed of your network.

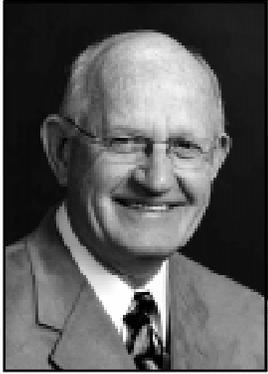
The second threat is *phishing*. Typically, an email that looks and feels real will be sent to you asking for your information so you can continue to use the site. These are usually bogus messages purporting to be from Ebay, PayPal, your credit card provider or online bank, or some other company you may have done business with through the Internet. You must be very careful about giving out information through an email or a popup. Always, *always* ignore the email’s request for information. Go directly to the website of the business that is supposedly sending the request. This will save you from identity theft, and will secure your personal information.

Technology is both a blessing and a curse. Be careful, or you will be burned by an unsecured wireless network or a phishing fiend.

A Multiplication Movement

Dr. Ron Hamilton, CCCC Director of Church Multiplication

I am excited to take on the responsibilities of the newly created position of Director of Church Multiplication. Having served as chair of the Church Multiplication Committee for seven years, I realize the opportunities facing the CCCC in church planting ministry. Since 1999, the CCCC has sent around fifty pastors and leaders to church planting training and has been a part of ten church planting projects. But, this is only the beginning! We want to start a *church multiplication movement*.



A church multiplication movement is driven by healthy pastors and churches that have a “multiplication mentality.” In *Beyond Church Growth* (Revell, 1989) Robert E. Logan states, “We will never complete the Great Commission

without the multiplication of churches. . . . Planting churches is by far the most cost-effective means of evangelism.” We

are not starting new churches to compete with other denominations, or simply to add to number of member churches in our conference. We are starting new churches to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus.

Our church planting efforts will begin with a concentrated effort in the Boston area. The Phillips Bequest was given to the CCCC by a church in South Boston that closed its doors in 2005. However, that church had a vision its ministry could be continued with the establishment of new churches. We have a core of pastors and churches ready to stand behind a church planting multiplication movement in that area.

We are also going to do focused ministry in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region. Our national offices are located there, and the Upper Midwest Congregational Fellowship has a history of supporting church multiplication.

Please pray for our efforts in church multiplication! The Lord has exciting things ahead for the CCCC, as we work together to build His kingdom.

New CCCC Logo Introduced

Dr. Richard Leonard, for the CCCC Editorial Committee

Over the past year the Editorial Committee of the CCCC, together with the Conference Minister and office staff, have been working on a new graphic identity for the CCCC in the form of a revised “logo.” This change has been timed to coincide with the move of the Conference office to Lake Elmo, Minnesota, resulting in the need for new stationery, business cards, and other materials such as revised CCCC publicity folders.

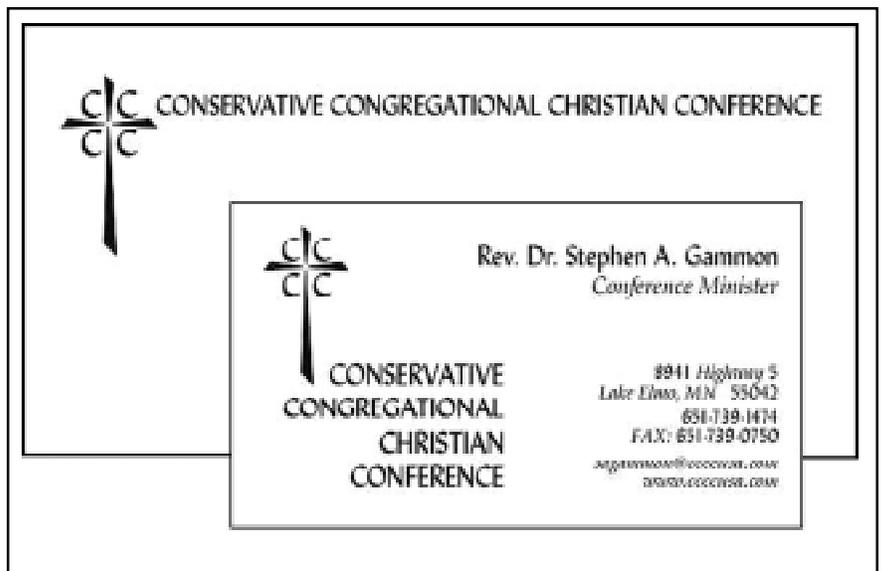
The new logo features a stylized cross designed by Committee member Kim Gardell of the Micronesia Ministry, together with Dr. Richard Leonard, *FORESEE* Co-Editor. The letters CCCC remain, as with the older logo, but the background rectangle is omitted. When reproduced in color the cross is red. The letters, which are in Lydian BT typeface, are a deep blue. These are the same colors, along with background white, as those used in the Christian flag. (In *THE FORESEE*'s new moss green color accent, green takes the place of red.)

The illustration shows how the new logo appears on the Conference Minister's business card and the Conference letterhead. The Conference name appears in blue, in the Lydian BT typeface.

The existing cross-and-rectangle logo may remain in use for those churches and pastors that have recently made church signs, stationery

or other items using that older design. Where it can be done at minimal cost, however, we recommend conversion to the new logo. Image files of the new logo can be obtained from the Conference office. We also recommend that local churches and CCCC organizations work toward adopting this typeface and these text configurations where possible.

Members of the Editorial Committee are Ken Winters (Chairman), Kim Gardell, Brad Zinnecker, Bryan Burrell (Media Manager), and Richard Leonard (*FORESEE* Editor).



A Reality Check

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

The Church in these United States is in serious trouble. We don't like to talk about it, but we all know it's true. Some local congregations are bringing glory to God by demonstrating Christ's love and increasing His kingdom, but the truth is that most are not. And we have nobody to blame but ourselves.

It's so easy to get into the "routine" of church ministry. Believe me, I know – I've been on that hamster wheel more than once. But beyond the routine, there is something else at work. We have an enemy – and we remain painfully unaware of his work. I believe that the most effective tools Satan uses to derail the church today are distraction, dissension, and dogma.

Distractions—we all have them. And so do our churches. Pastors often succumb to the tyranny of the urgent. We spend our days putting out fires. We run from one ministry crisis to another. But our churches can also get distracted. There are holiday traditions, vacation Bible school, building programs and implementing what worked in the church down

We can become so focused on theology that we forget to practice it.

the road. These kinds of things can pull our attention away from what really matters. We can become so busy working for the Lord that, ironically, He can't actually use us!

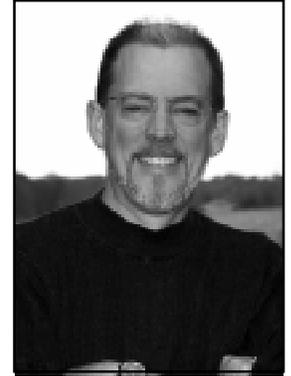
Dissension—we all endure it. Every congregation has powerbrokers, gossips and cliques. It shouldn't be that way in the Church, but it is. We allow unspiritual people to hold positions of spiritual authority and wonder why we have problems. Pastors spend so much of their time defending their ministry and pleasing powerbrokers that they have little

left for reaching the lost. Our young people see this and then we wonder why they run from the church when they go to college. And we can't figure out why so few today decide to enter the gospel ministry!

Dogma—we all love it. I need to be careful here, because in our CCCC family doctrine is so vital. But this one may be the most insidious of all. Especially among those of us who came from backgrounds where we had to passionately defend the truth, we can become so focused on theology that we forget to actually practice it. Our doctrinal statements are deep and meaningful, but they often lack actual praxis – the very reason they are so essential. I think this is the heart of James' statement, "Faith without deeds is dead" (James 1:22; 2:20, 26).

What is the fruit of all this? We need a reality check! Over 80% of American Churches (including evangelicals) are plateaued or declining. 95% of believers in the U.S. have *never* prayed with anyone to receive Christ. The average length of a pastorate in our country is now only 18 months! Over 1500 pastors change pulpits each month now, and in some denominations as many as 45% of those pastors are leaving the ministry altogether.

This is my heartbeat. This is my calling. And in God's providence, addressing this is my new job. There are a lot of details to work out – and a lot of work to be done. But God loves the CCCC too much to let us fall into these statistics. I covet your prayers and your support.



Treasurer's Tidbits from Tay

Rev. Tay Kersey, Treasurer of the CCCC

Periodically, by way of *THE FORESEE*, I want to keep you all informed of various items pertaining to giving to either your own church or toward the office needs at the CCCC.

Two important recent changes by the IRS are as follows:

1. Beginning with 2007, only *receipted contributions* to a charitable organization will be allowed as deductions for one's income tax. *No unidentified cash contributions* can be included. This should increase the use of envelopes in

churches for Sunday school, benevolent offerings and freewill special offerings.

2. Up until 2006 all money distributed from an IRA (Individual Retirement Account) was subject to taxes. For 2006 and 2007, a person over 70½ years of age can donate up to \$100,000 to a charitable organization and that person will *not* be liable for taxes on that gift. Should you need additional information of this new privilege, please contact our office.

Sincerely HIS, Tay

50th Annual Family Conference

July 16-19, 2007 - Anaheim, California

Crowne Plaza Resort



The Crowne Plaza Resort in Anaheim (Garden Grove) is near

Disneyland

for great family fun! Take advantage of this opportunity to combine spiritual renewal and family recreation.

There will be a special opportunity to visit Disneyland on Tuesday evening.

In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. — 1 Peter 3:15



Evening Speaker

Tuesday and Wednesday

Rev. Charles J. Youngkin
Senior Pastor, Carlsbad Community Church

Rev. Youngkin has been Pastor of Carlsbad Community Church, Carlsbad, California since 2004, and a member of the CCCC since 2005. Ordained in 1978, he formerly served the Morgan Hill Bible Church. He is a graduate of Talbot Seminary and International School of Theology, and is working on the D.Min. from Denver Theological Seminary.

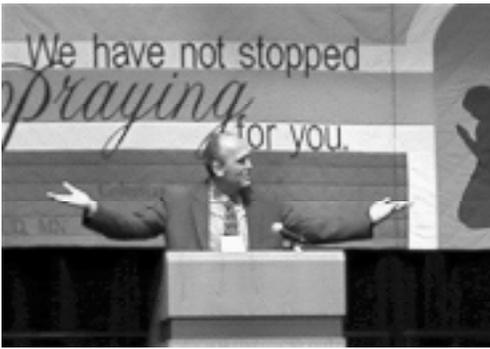
Morning Bible Hour

Tuesday - Thursday

David Bryant
President of PROCLAIM HOPE!

The mission of PROCLAIM HOPE! is to "foster and serve a nationwide "Christ-awakening movement." David Bryant has been involved in the emergence of a worldwide prayer movement incorporating regional rallies; national and international conferences; training videos, seminars and manuals; development of leadership coalitions; mentoring of younger leaders; and media outreach.





Monday Evening Speaker

Dr. Stephen A. Gammon, CCCC Conference Minister

Dr. Gammon has served as Conference Minister since 2003. He has pastored churches in New England, and is a Reserve Chaplain in the United States Navy.

(Photo from 2006 Annual Conference)



Women's Ministry Speaker

Carole Wolaver, Northridge, California

"The Pottery Lady" combines pottery making with stories that illustrate Biblical truth.

Men's Banquet Speaker

Chaplain R. Wayne Hall, USN

Lt. Hall has been deployed to the Iraq theater in both Naval and Marine operations. Currently he is stationed at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center at Bridgeport, California.



Youth Ministry

Pastor Bryan Sarile

Congregational Christian Church, Los Angeles

Children's Ministry

Saskia Van Leeuwen

Carlsbad Community Church

(Photo from 2006 Annual Conference children's ministry)

Conference Music Ministry by Dr. Phil Hoyer and the worship team from Carlsbad Community Church

Colorful Displays

The Annual Family Conference always features displays by CCCC agencies, parachurch ministries, publishers and other helpful organizations.

(Photo from 2005 Annual Conference displays)



Stimulating Seminars

A wealth of seminar presentations will be offered to challenge you in many areas of Christian growth, missionary vision and church life.

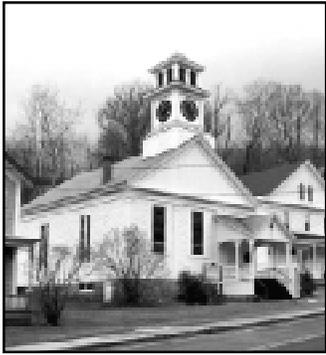
(Photo from 2006 Annual Conference)

Local Arrangements Chairman: Rev. Edward Veldhuizen Seminar Coordinator: Pastor Charles Van Kirk

Register Soon!
The Annual Family Conference brochure with complete information, including a registration form and online registration available through www.cccusa.com, will be mailed shortly. Register as soon as possible. For information call the CCCC Office, 651-739-1474.

Cornerstone Corps Plays Key Role in Vermont Roof Project

Contributions from CCCC Cornerstone Corps members were instrumental in restoring the slate roof of Jacksonville Community Church, Jacksonville, Vermont, according to Pastor L. Douglas LaPlante.



The extensive project involved first removing the old tiles and repairing damaged rafters. The roofers carefully replaced each roof timber in its original form, using 12-inch boards rather than plywood. The new roof, like the original, will be good for another 100 years.

The roof project involved the entire congregation in fund-

raising efforts, from suppers and concerts to letter campaigns. But the project has a spiritual benefit as well. "We found ourselves drawn closer together as one," commented Pastor LaPlante, "as we worked tirelessly in Christian harmony raising the necessary funding while promoting God's grace and glory throughout the community."

But help from the Cornerstone Corps was a critical part of the restoration effort. "The Cornerstone Corps was indeed our knight in shining armor," Pastor LaPlante stated. "We could not have done it without the support of our wonderful corps of men and women and sister churches."

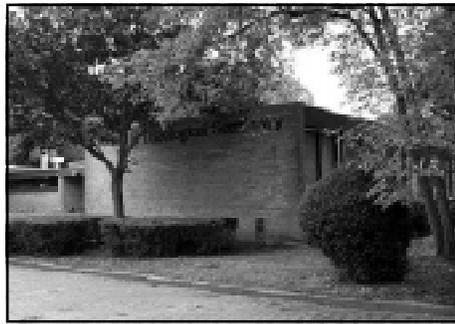
Members of the Cornerstone Corps pledge to contribute at least \$10.00, no oftener than twice annually, toward projects similar to the one at Jacksonville Community Church. To become a member, contact the Conference office.

Tyndale Seminary, Amsterdam, Serves Intercultural Community

H. Drake Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director of Admissions

The world is coming to Amsterdam. Historically, travelers and refugees from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia have come through the Netherlands to find safety until they could determine their next destination. That trend continues today.

In this diverse, intercultural environment Tyndale Theological Seminary has been providing evangelical masters-level theological training since 1985. Students have come from more than 60 countries. More than 450 have graduated, with most returning to their home countries to serve as pastors, missionaries, Christian educators and Bible translators. Out of a current student body of 50, there are five Dutch students.



God has been doing great things at the seminary in recent years. A dormitory housing more than forty students has been built. Enrollment has increased dramatically, with applications at an all-time high. A 13-000-volume library has been completed.

There is great potential to influence the church worldwide. Please pray for the work at Tyndale Seminary, Amsterdam, that God would develop the next generation of leaders for the church in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Drake Williams, Ph.D. is an ordained CCCC minister. He and his wife Andrea, with their three children, left a Pennsylvania pastorate in 2005 to join this mission effort. Tyndale Seminary in Amsterdam is not related to Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Ontario.

RCF Confessional Conference Set for April 17-19

The Reformed Congregational Fellowship (RCF) will sponsor its annual Confessional Conference on Tuesday-Thursday, April 17-19, 2007. The Conference will be held at the Wonderland Conference Center in Sharon, Massachusetts, midway between major airports in Boston and Providence.

Topic of this year's conference is "Of Justification," chapter 11 of the Savoy Declaration of Faith. The Declaration is the historic theological standard for American Congregationalism.

Conference themes will include:

- An exploration of Martin Luther's *Freedom of a Christian* and the role of justification in the work of the Church
- Justification: God's covenantal solution to the sinner's real guilt
- All Christ's righteousness needed for our salvation, and why
- Justification as preached by John Wesley and George Whitefield
- Justification in the Old Testament.

The Wonderland Center, a Salvation Army facility, offers motel-like rooms. Cost for the conference is \$110 double occupancy (\$140 single). Meals are included from Tuesday supper, when the Conference opens, through Thursday luncheon.

Conference organizer is Rev. David Green, Moderator of the RCF. For more information visit www.reformedcongregational.org and click the link to "Conferences." You can also email Rev. Green at davidg@cornerstonebeverly.org or contact him at 14 McKinley Avenue, Beverly, MA 01915-3430 (508-596-6862).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Conscience of a Nation*

Richard C. Leonard, Ph.D., Co-Editor of *THE FORESEE*

Famous as the author of the anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe was a devout Christian and a member of an eminent Congregationalist-Presbyterian family. (During the first three decades of the 1800s, Congregationalists and Presbyterians worked together under the "Plan of Union.") Harriet's father, Lyman Beecher, was a New England pastor who became president of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. Two of her brothers, Henry Ward Beecher and Charles Beecher, became prominent Congregational ministers.

Harriet was born in Litchfield, Connecticut in 1811. She first knew herself to be a Christian in her early teen years during a Communion service. She found she could not bring herself to what she considered a sufficient enumeration of all her sins. But when her father spoke, describing Christ as "patient with our errors, compassionate with our weaknesses, and sympathetic for our sorrows," she responded to the appeal to "trust your soul to this faithful friend." Filled with a newfound joy, she told her father afterwards, "I have given myself to Jesus, and He has taken me." Although periods of self-doubt occurred later on, Harriet's understanding of Christ's love was to motivate her in writing the book for which she is best known.

After moving to Cincinnati in 1832 Harriet became a teacher. Here, across the Ohio River from a slave state, she was first exposed to the conditions of slavery and to the "underground railroad" that hid fugitive slaves from their former owners. Some of the situations she encountered were to find their way into the story of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

While in Cincinnati Harriet married the widowed Professor Calvin E. Stowe and moved to Brunswick, Maine when he accepted a post at Bowdoin College. In 1850 the U.S. Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, which imposed severe penalties for harboring or failing to apprehend runaway slaves. Outraged, Harriet vowed, "I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." From this resolve came *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which appeared serially in a magazine in 1851-52 and then in book form in 1853. The book so aroused anti-slavery sentiment that enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law became impossible in many parts of the country. After its publication Harriet Beecher Stowe became a celebrity, speaking against slavery both in America and Europe.

Of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet later wrote, "This story is to show how Jesus Christ, who liveth and was dead, and now is alive and forever-more, has still a mother's love for the poor and lowly, and that no man can sink so low but that



Jesus Christ will stoop to take his hand. Who so low, who so poor, who so despised as the American slave?" Her sympathy for the black slave was made the stronger by personal loss in the death of several of her children. In 1853 she wrote to an

English correspondent, "I had two little, curly-headed twin daughters to begin with, and my stock in this line has gradually increased, till I have been the mother of seven children, the most beautiful and the most loved of whom lies buried near my Cincinnati residence. It was at his dying bed and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her."

When Abraham Lincoln met Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1862, during the Civil War, he is said to have remarked "So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!"

A biographer commented, "*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a work of religion; the fundamental principles of the gospel applied to the burning question of negro slavery."

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote at least fifteen books after *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and died in Hartford, Connecticut in 1896. Reflecting on her career one is led to ask: Will the Lord raise up a voice such as hers to confront this nation with the sin of our time, in which millions of preborn lives are considered expendable at the discretion of their "owners"?

The Walls of Jericho

Shirley Anne Leonard

So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. — Joshua 6:20

The walls of Jericho were strong indeed, and stood like iron bastions in the land. Our walls are different — our belief and creed that separate. How can we understand the law of Christ, His royal great command to love our God and neighbor, which imparts a unity, extends a helping hand to all who confess Jesus in their hearts?

The walls of Jericho fell not by man. It took His power, with angels' strength and skill, to level them, and manifest His plan. Then how shall our walls fall, to work His will that all the earth be covered with His Word, His kingdom touched and seen — and not just heard?

From Remembering Eden, Laudemont Press, 2006

Faith at the Edge

Gregory A. Monaco, Youth for Christ, Great Lakes Region

So, what kind of faith do you have? What kind is it, if it doesn't stretch you?

Abraham was asked to sacrifice his only son after being promised that he would father nations. It didn't make sense, but in faith he obeyed. It stretched him to take Isaac up that mountain. He didn't know how it would work out, but he had faith that somehow it would. It had to; God had promised and Abraham believed Him.

So how about us? Those of us who believe in Jesus Christ and his salvation are called children of Abraham. Why? Because like Abraham, we are saved through faith — faith that comes to us as a gift from God (Romans 12:3). The question is: When God has spoken to us, have we climbed our personal Mount Moriah and obeyed?

One of my favorite teaching activities, when I was working with at-risk teens, was to take them rappelling — the sport of descending a cliff using a rope, harness and a braking device to control speed. In preparation I'd bring a climbing rope to our small group meetings and pass it around. They'd tug on it, read the tag that attested that it was "tested to 10,000 pounds shock strength," and even hang from the rope from a basketball backboard. I'd ask if they trusted it, if they believed it could hold them, if they had faith in it. Invariably they'd say, "Yes."

Then, the day of the trip would come. Settling into our campsite, after s'mores and scary stories, I'd bring out the rope. In the shadow of the cliffs, I'd ask how they felt about the rope now that they could see the challenge first hand. Most of them would brag that they "weren't afraid of nuthin'" and that they'd trust the rope . . . but was that a bit of hesitation I heard?

Then the day dawned and we would hike to the top of the cliffs. While the others hung back, grateful to let someone else take the risks, the first volunteer would be strapped into the harness and clip into the now familiar rope. I'd back them up to the cliff on wobbly legs and pause to ask: "Do you trust the rope?" About half the time I'd get a shaky "yes." The other responses would range from tears to screams to paralysis.

Eventually all of them were coaxed over the edge of the cliff on their first rappel. Once they were six feet or so down the face of the 100-foot cliff I'd stop them, lean over the edge and ask: "Do you trust the rope now?" Almost always, the response was a grin, and a knowing, "Yes, I do. I get it now!"

That night at the fire we'd talk about trusting in God, having faith in him. By the time of the trip, most of the guys or girls



Flickr Photo by "crazylegs"

would have heard about "accepting Christ" and "believing in Christ" several times in their weekly meetings. But now, when I would tell them that God wanted them to trust him — like they trusted the rope today — you could see the light come on in their eyes. They got it.

How about you? Do you trust God?

When faced with a challenge, do you jump right in with false bravado because you "aren't afraid of nuthin'?" Some people find it easy to face tests relying on their own power. They're "wired" to be risk takers; it feels natural to just jump in. When they rise to a challenge, they don't do it out of faith, but out of temperament.

Or do you find a way to say, "I'll hang back and watch?" Some of us always seem to find a way to walk away from a challenge. We reason that it "isn't the right time in my life," or "I don't feel a peace about it." But what we mean is that the challenge is too intimidating.

Or, coming face to face with a challenge from God, do you trust Him, strap in and go for it — wobbly legs and all? The response of the faithful is to trust that God has led them to the cliff, to check and make sure their gear is in order, then step over the edge:

Therefore put on the full armor of God... the belt of truth buckled around your waist, the breastplate of righteousness in place, with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith. . . . Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (Ephesians 6:13a-18 excerpted).

Those that take "faith" risks step out in a trust that lets God get us through the challenge. Our faith is tested, not just our resolve. Our faith grows, not our pride. Our fear is overcome; we learn to trust in God more and more.

James asks, "What good is it if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? In the same way faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:14a, 17).

A life where we walk in faith means living in the expectancy of God's presence. His control of our world, His leading in our lives, and His provision for all our needs — physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual. A living faith should stretch you beyond your comfort zone, should move you into action and should profoundly change us.

If it isn't, maybe you are standing too far from the edge.

Reprinted from Youth for Christ Great Lakes Region Newsletter, October 2006. Greg Monaco is a licensed CCCC minister.

Remembering Eden

Shirley Anne Leonard

Remembering Eden . . .
I pause to touch a rose
and find it clothed
with the tenderness of God.
Remembering Eden . . .
I shudder at death,
an alien invader
come to spoil my sweet garden.
Remembering Eden . . .
there is an emptiness everywhere,
something I miss
pervades the very air
as though God had left me here alone.

Remembering Eden . . .
Christ lived.
Remembering Eden . . .
Christ died —
and across the darkness
of the planet echoed
His triumphant shout,
“It is finished!”
And He arose
remembering Eden
and bringing it with Him.

From Remembering Eden, Laudemont Press, 2006

Changes and Opportunities

Pastoral Changes:

Biola CA	Biola Congregational Church* called Timothy McDonald*
Garner IA	Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church* called David Graham
Grinnell IA	Newburg-Chester Congregational* called Walter Clausen
Flint MI	Cross Church* called Dan Chester*
Avon MN	Avon Community Church* called Charles Pelkey*
Lake Elmo MN	St Lucas Community Church* called Dan Peterson*
Loysburg PA	St John's Reformed Church* called Mark Wurst*

Pastoral Openings:

Pasadena CA	Lake Avenue Congregational Church*
Longmont CO	Christ Congregational Church*
Chaplin CT	Chaplin Congregational Church*
Middletown IN	Sulphur Springs Christian Church (UCC)
Winchester IN	Winchester Congregational Christian Church
Emporia KS	First Congregational Church* (Associate)
Boxford MA	First Church Congregational*
Carthage ME	Carthage Union Church* (part time)
Ellsworth ME	First Congregational Church (UCC)
Atlanta MI	Big Rock Congregational Church*
Honor MI	Honor Congregational Church*
New Haven MI	First Congregational Church* (part time)
Laurel MT	First Congregational Church*
Taylor MT	Taylor Parish
Scottsbluff NE	Emmanuel Congregational Church*
Ossipee NH	First Congregational Church (Associate)
Lake View NY	Lake View Congregational Church*
Speculator NY	North Country Bible Church*
Greenville OH	First Congregational Christian Church*
Vermilion OH	Vermilion Evangelical and Reformed Church*
Bernville PA	St. Thomas UCC
Disputanta VA	Bethlehem Congregational Church* (Part time)
Suffolk VA	Cypress Chapel Christian Church*
Spring Valley WI	Spring Valley Congregational Church*

* = Conference member

+ = In process

Health Tips

Osteopenia

Osteopenia, or decreasing bone mineral density, has no symptoms. To help decrease the progression to osteoporosis, increase calcium intake. Dairy products and green vegetables are sources, along with supplements. Combine with vitamin D, found also in eggs and some fish. Weight-bearing exercises, walking or dancing aid bone formation. Avoid smoking and excessive use of alcohol, caffeine and colas. Encourage children to eat properly for bone health.

Source: www.webmd.com

Diabetes

The American Diabetes Association estimates that 41 million Americans aged 40-74 have pre-diabetes. Diabetes can damage the heart and circulatory system and increase the risk for Alzheimer's. As people age they lose sensitivity to insulin (blood-sugar regulating hormone). Help prevent diabetes with weight loss and exercise. Start by controlling food portions and keep fat in your diet under 30% daily. Begin an exercise program in two daily 15-minute segments, if necessary. Have your blood sugar levels checked. A good number is between 100 and 126. Find out more at www.diabetes.org.

Source: www.diabetes.org

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

Christ Wept

Shirley Anne Leonard

And when he drew near and saw the city he wept over it, saying, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes." — Luke 19:41-42

Christ wept . . .
how great a Heart
to shed such human tears!

Did all the flowers
bow their heads
and birds forget to sing,
as when some cataclysmic shock
jars every living thing?

Did angels stop
mid-flight to stare,
forgetful of their wing,
and all creation stand in awe
of such a tender King?

From Remembering Eden, Laudemont Press, 2006



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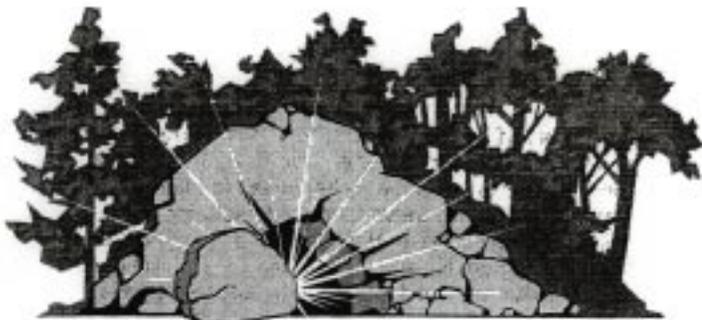
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THE FORESEE

March/April 2007 Volume 39, No. 2

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