

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Round Table Continues to Grow**
- **What Will Not Change in the CCCC**
- **Assessment Tells Us a Lot**
- **Living Out a Shared Life and Mission in New Hampshire**
- **What We Can Learn from International Church Planting**
- **World Outreach—Brazil**
- **Essential Fatty Acids**

CONSERVATIVE  
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CHRISTIAN  
CONFERENCE

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## AROUND THE CONFERENCE

# Round Table Meeting Fellowship Continues to Grow



*by Rev. John T. Dale, pastor of Mayflower Congregational Church, Kingston, Massachusetts  
Southeastern Massachusetts Area Representative*

*Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*  
Psalm 133:1

For the last several years, the pastors in Southeastern Massachusetts (SEMA) have been actively engaged in Round Table meetings on the third Wednesday of each month, September through June at the Evangelical Congregational Church of South Easton, Massachusetts.

Last year the Conference leadership developed what it calls the “Seven Guiding Values.” These values are; “A Culture of Believing Prayer and Intercession, Healthy Pastors, Healthy Disciple-Making Churches, Healthy Church Multiplication, A Community that Lives out a Shared Life and Shared Mission, A Culture of Peacemaking and Reconciliation and A Membership Reflective of the Harvest Field’s Diversity.”

The monthly gatherings we now enjoy are in part a reflection of these values. We come together to learn to dwell in unity, we come to be more connected in Christ and with each other. We come to pray and bear one another’s burdens, and to pray for our churches and ministries here in Massachusetts.

Of the twenty-one churches in our region, more than half of our pastors have been in attendance at

various Round Table meetings to share. We have also been blessed to have Rev. Terry Shanahan, our regional minister here in the Northeast, in attendance as well. It has been encouraging to see this group of pastors grow in friendship and respect for one another.

Last year in our gatherings we discussed how each of us studies and prepares for Sunday sermons. We were able to present a recent message and discuss the process of studying and writing. The Bible says, As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverb 27:17) And we have definitely found this to be so.

Beginning September 2012, the group began a new study featuring the book, *The Good News We Almost Forgot — Rediscovering the Gospel in a Sixteenth Century Catechism*, by Kevin DeYoung. Those who have been attending are finding this book to be very helpful, and the conversation surrounding each chapter has been spiritually stimulating. As noted in the introduction, author Kevin DeYoung writes,

“The Heidelberg Catechism is a giant of mind sharpening, Christ worshipping, soul inspiring devotion. Stand on its shoulders and see more of Christ who saves us from our guilt by His grace and makes us,

## CM COMMENTS

# What Will Not Change in the CCCC

**Ron Hamilton**, *Conference Minister*



The wind of change is blowing in the CCCC as we have been called to align our ministry to God's call for us to live in obedience to Jesus as we...

- Love God.
- Love others.
- As we go, make disciples.

As the leadership of the Conference grapples with the issue of change, it is important to dialogue about some things that won't change in the CCCC as we remain fully committed to Biblical Congregationalism in our generation. Rather, God is calling us to fulfill our purpose in new and exciting ways. The statement of our purpose is clearly articulated in Article II of our Constitution:

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

1. To promote the worship of God in our churches.
2. To deepen and extend the fellowship of our churches.
3. To encourage a steadfast, Biblical witness by our churches.
4. To facilitate cooperation and counsel among our churches with regard to evangelism, edification, Christian education, stewardship, missions, church extension, Christian action, women's and men's fellowships, youth activities, the pastoral ministry, and other related concerns.

5. To preserve and promote the Scriptural principles of the autonomy of the local church and the freedom of the believer in Christ.

This purpose fully aligns with the vision that has emerged in our midst. We encourage one another to love God as we promote the worship of God in our churches. We strengthen our love of others as we deepen and extend the fellowship of our churches. We call people to make disciples as we encourage a steadfast, Biblical witness in our churches. We live out shared life and shared mission as we facilitate cooperation and counsel among our churches. While there is a new movement of church multiplication in the Conference, we have always been committed to church extension. We speak to the issues of healthy pastors and healthy churches as we preserve and promote the principles of our congregational heritage. Our Guiding Values simply give us a new way to express our purpose and work together on living it out to the fullest extent.

This is a time to welcome change. These are days to invite God to work in our midst to renew our commitment to the values that brought us together sixty-five years ago. The theme of our 2013 annual conference is "Being Changed." The theme verse is 2 Corinthians 3:18:

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Please join me in praying that God will continue to move among us as we open our lives, our churches and our Conference to God's transforming work. ♦

## CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

# What We Can Learn from International Church Planting



*Comments by Ed Stetzer from his blog, [www.edstetzer.com](http://www.edstetzer.com)*

(Used by permission)

Edited by Ron Hamilton

I've been working through a series of reflections on what we can learn from international church planting, based on a recent meeting with the North American Church Planting Leadership Fellowship. For what we have covered thus far, go to: [www.edstetzer.com](http://www.edstetzer.com) and access:

- Be a Learner, not a Leader
- Be Simple and Reproducible
- We Need Greater Commitment to Discipleship

When you have empowered simple structures and empowered disciples, it is natural that you would have empowered leaders — which leads to the next point.

**Fourth, empowered non-staff leadership regularly marks the Church Planting Movements seen around the world.** We have heard this repeated on multiple occasions, and from multiple speakers working in a variety of areas around the world. The growing global church provides more empowerment for people to go out and do.

When we look in the New Testament, we see the ordinary practice of ordinary Christians planting ordinary churches. In the West, we have “professionalized” basic components of the Christian life in church. While we might never admit it, we have sometimes eliminated disciple-making from the vocabulary of the regular Christian, and relegated that responsibility to the “super Christians” or the “professional Christians,” i.e. the clergy. I wrote a whole series on this issue last year on the blog. The clergy-laity caste system we have created has significantly bottled up the exponential potential of the church in the West.

The healthy and growing parts of the global church are looking at Scripture, acknowledging the responsibility of every Christ-follower to be and make disciples, and opening up the floodgate of disciple-makers by equipping every person to be about that business. We must learn from them and do the same.

But I truly believe this last part is the high point, leading us to the final principle.

**We must recover respect for and reliance on the Holy Spirit in church planting.**

We consistently hear a theme of reliance upon the work of the Holy Spirit regardless of the theological family of the speaker. As we examine the landscape of global movements, we cannot help but see there is a great emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and a great reliance upon the necessity of the Holy Spirit.

In the Western church, we love to systematize and analyze what we do. To be honest, I think systems and analyses are helpful — which seems obvious considering my job. I lead a research firm, so I clearly am committed to research, administration, and analysis. But I fear we are placing too much hope in our systems. We need our systems — and if we love planters we will have systems to support them — but we cannot hope in our systems alone.

We have to remember our systems and analyses serve a greater purpose, and that is to facilitate the purposes of God.

He is first, and His movement trumps everything else. That does not mean we avoid systems, processes and analyses. In fact, I think it means the opposite. We value those things, and use them widely, while remembering our ultimate success or failure is dependent on God through the person of the Holy Spirit. Our hope is in Him. Our success is in Him. Our Church Planting Movements will come from Him. ♦

## CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

## Assessment Tells Us a Lot

by **John Kimball**,  
*CCCC Director of Church Development*



Whether it's for a congregation beginning the Church Development process, a pastor who finds himself in transition between churches, or a church planter seeking a good match for pioneering a work, a good assessment is an essential step. The CCCC has many assessment tools at our disposal, including an outstanding one that has been developed specifically for church planters by our CCCC Northstar Church Planting Center.

For our *LifeFlow* Church Development process, we use a combination of three assessments:

- Vista Church Dialogue — a thorough interview with the church leadership to discuss key aspects of the church's life and ministry together as they relate to living out the priorities of loving God, loving people and making disciples.
- Vista Pastoral Dialogue — a thorough interview with the pastor to discuss key aspects of personal life and witness, family life and witness, and local church ministry as they relate to living out the priorities of loving God, loving people and making disciples.
- Natural Church Development (NCD) Survey Tool — a survey of the church membership designed to evaluate the health and growth potential of that congregation against eight essential, "quality characteristics."

Thus, the pastor(s), leadership and the congregation are all assessed to give us the most accurate result. The two Vista dialogues gather important qualitative information about how the pastor and church demonstrate consistent, faithful obedience to Christ

ASSESSMENT (cont. on page 5)

## NE REGION NEWS

## Living out a Shared Life and Mission in New Hampshire

by **Terry H. Shanahan**,  
*Northeast Regional Minister*



*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the*

*Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18*

On a cold and windy winter's night a number of the New Hampshire CCCC Pastors and their wives were warmed by the fellowship as they gathered in Boscawan, New Hampshire to share a meal, and connect with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Ron Hamilton. Our hosts, area representative David Randlett and his wife Shawn brought these 15 couples out on that dark winter night to enjoy the fellowship of like-minded believers living out a shared life and mission.

For years the New Hampshire pastors' group has been meeting once a month as a ministerium that builds one another up through God's word, committing to pray for and encourage one another in the work of God's kingdom. These gatherings are usually followed by a brown bag lunch. For several of those years, conversations took place about how we could involve our spouses in this uplifting fellowship experience. This year Pastor Dave and Shawn hit upon the perfect solution for us to meet together for dinner with no agenda other than to share our lives. The timing couldn't have been better, as our Confer-

LIVING OUT (cont. on page 5)



## ASSESSMENT (cont. from page 4)

as they live out the faith together, discipling young and old, developing spiritual leaders and reaching their respective harvest fields through intercessory prayer and evangelism. The Natural Church Development survey gathers quantitative data on how the church's leadership empowers people for ministry, how well members minister within their divine design, the level of personal spiritual passion that marks the people, how functional are the church structures, how the worship services lead people into the presence of God, how holistic is the ministry of the small groups, the effectiveness of the church's need-based evangelism efforts, and the depth of the loving relationships within the congregation.

When these tools are combined, they give us a very clear and accurate picture of the church's strengths and what areas need more attention to improve ministry quality, more effectively reach the lost and most readily expand God's rule and reign through that congregation. The results allow us to be very specific in what we address.

Assessment is a critical step in the preparation and planning of all aspects of local church ministry. And for those churches investigating the *LifeFlow* process, it is mandatory. If you would like more information on our assessment process or on the various assessments we have available for the CCCC Family, please contact our office at (651) 739-1474. ♦

## ROUND TABLE (cont. from page 1)

through His Spirit, wholeheartedly willing and ready to live for Him."

As SEMA pastors connect each month in our study and prayer time, we are discovering what the Psalmist noted above; that it is good and pleasant to be together and that we can benefit from meeting with a real desire and purpose to focus on prayer and intercession, spiritual health and discipleship, sharing life and mission and even developing that culture of peacemaking as we "dwell together in unity." ♦

# The Ninevah Project

SAVE THE DATE!  
APRIL 22-25, 2013  
2ND ANNUAL CCCC CHURCH PLANTERS CONFERENCE  
REVERE, MA



## LIVING OUT (cont. from page 4)

ence Minister was traveling in the Northeast. Ron was able to come and share all that is happening in the Conference, how God is blessing that, and ending with a wonderful devotional that was uplifting to us all. After Ron's presentation, more than one pastor jokingly commented, "Oh good, now I have a great sermon for Sunday."

This is an example of one of our guiding values — a community that lives out a shared life and shared mission. "We are operating as a family unit, submitting to Christ as the host, reconciled to God and one another, partaking of what the Lord provides." (Taken from Guiding Values brochure.)

As Jesus shared with us in John 17:22-23, "*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*"

The fellowship was sweet, the message was uplifting, the food was delicious and as we were being brought to unity in that busy New Hampshire restaurant. The world could see our witness that the God of the universe loves us, and has blessed us with a special bond which makes us one. ♦

## WORLD OUTREACH



*from*  
**Alden Barrows,**  
**CCCC**  
*missionary*  
*serving under*  
**Fellowship**  
**International**  
**Mission.**

## Brazil

Dear fellow pilgrims on  
 “the Upward Way,”

I trust that it is true that we are “gaining new heights every day.” Last weekend our church celebrated its 25th anniversary here in Rio Preto, Brazil! It has been really a time of rejoicing and praising the Lord for all He has done. I’m glad He is keeping the records, as my computer has broken down and lost many valuable records in the past two and a half years! My “back-up” was not as efficient as I thought it was. A good Scriptural “jog” to encourage developing good communications is Malachi 3:16. If our computer breaks down or our diary gets lost, God has a good back-up system. Right? Don’t forget: Malachi 3:16, *“Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name.”*

We thank the Lord that the gall bladder operation in October was very successful. The doctor said that it was the largest gall bladder that he had ever removed in his 20 years’ experience. God has been good, and there were no ill effects. Thanks for your prayers!

The church services and visitation at the clinic have continued right along every Sunday morning, except for the first two Sundays in October when I was operated on. The urgency and pathos of the clinic/rest home is accentuated with the death of some four residents in the last four months. At least seven have raised their hands for salvation and prayed with me accepting Christ as Savior. Thanks for your faithful prayers!

At the graveyard, four have very definitely accepted Christ as Savior, and several others on the way there and related trips.

Special, urgent prayer is needed because the church has been going through some difficult times: 1. The young people’s leader has stopped meetings for them, 2. The pastor has stopped holding meetings out at the suburb house. 3. The offerings have gone down and the pastor is not receiving his whole salary. 4. The prayer meetings have dwindled to nine or ten people. 5. Most of the key young people have removed their membership and moved to other churches. 6. Our musicians have mostly stopped coming to church. 7. And to top it off, the pastor has turned in his resignation effective as of the end of January, and, 8. There is no replacement pastor in view. The MORAL of the story is “When things get tough, don’t give up! That is just the time to pitch in and work! Thanks for your prayers!

Pray for wisdom, whether I should step in or continue to keep uninvolved. I am presently totally removed from church leadership here. Also as a sidelight, as of December 31, 2012, I am officially retired, but not practically, as a missionary. This gives me more time for His work.

Keep praying, and Thanks for all you’ve done over the years!

Strengthened by the Blessed Hope of His return, I am His for Brazil, Alden ♦

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND READERS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your contributions  
 to our publication.

If you have comments on what you read here,  
 please e-mail them to

*kenandjoy@bellsouth.net.*

If you have other comments or articles you wish  
 to contribute, including Something to Think About,  
 please send them to the same e-mail address.

## CHANGES &amp; OPPORTUNITIES

## PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES

Blue Island, IL	Evangelical Community Church*
LaMoille, IL	First Congregational Church*
Otsego, MI	First Congregational Church of Otsego *
W Newbury, MA	W Newbury Congregational Church* (Asst. Pastor – Youth and Families)
Cook, MN	Ashawa Chapel* (Part-time)
Inwood, NY	Community Bible Church* (Part-time)
Scotia, NY	East Glenville Community Church*
Robertsville, OH	Christ Memorial Church*
Sardis, OH	St. Paul's Church* (Part-time)
Alexandria, PA	Christ Reformed Church*
Reynoldsville, PA	Paradise Community Church (UCC)
Warren, PA	Good News Community Church* (Part-time)
Woxall, PA	Old Goshenhoppen Reformed Church (Independent)
Parkston, SD	Salem United Church of Christ (UCC)
Orwell, VT	First Congregational Church (Independent) (Part-time)
Hillsboro, WI	First Congregational Church*

\* = Conference member

+ = In process

## HEALTH NEWS

## Essential Fatty Acids

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

There are some fatty acids we need for our body to build healthy cells and maintain brain and nerve functioning properly. Two of the good polyunsaturated fats are omega-3 and omega-6. Since our bodies cannot produce them, nor can they be stored in our

bodies, we need to be sure our daily diet contains enough through the food we eat.

Omega-6 comes from plant sources such as corn oil, soybean oil and sunflower oil in addition to nuts and seeds. Omega-3s are found in fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and tuna as well as from walnuts and flaxseed.

Since polyunsaturated fats are thought to be good for lowering the risk of heart disease and possibly other conditions, it is important to include them in your diet.

Some ways to include more omega-3 and omega-6 in your diet include adding more nuts to your diet, either as a snacks or include them in your meals. Eating fish will help increase your omega-3 levels. If you cannot eat fish, other sources of omega-3 include flaxseed oil, walnuts and green leafy vegetables.

Many people eat more omega-6 found in vegetable oils and processed foods. The recommendation is there be a ratio between the amount of omega-6 and omega-3 consumed to be of benefit to your body.

More omega-3 should be consumed daily than omega-6. Reading the nutrition panel on food packaging will help you determine if you are consuming more polyunsaturated fats and less saturated foods.

Switching from saturated fats such as butter and cream to unsaturated fats such as vegetable oil and low-fat dairy products will also help in lowering your cholesterol levels. ♦

Source: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com); [www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com)

# The 65th Annual Family Conference July 22-25, 2013 Crowne Plaza Hotel, Riverfront—St. Paul, MN

**Registration brochures will soon be available!**

## THEME: BEING CHANGED

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

July 22–25 we meet in St. Paul, Minnesota at the Crowne Plaza Hotel — Riverfront, 11 East Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 (About a 20-minute drive from our home office in Lake Elmo.) [www.crowneplaza.com](http://www.crowneplaza.com) or call: 1-877-270-1393.

### SPEAKERS:

#### MORNING BIBLE

##### HOUR:

Rev. Dr. Leith Anderson,  
President of National Association of Evangelicals, noted author & retired pastor of Wooddale Church, Eden Prairie, MN

#### MON EVENING:

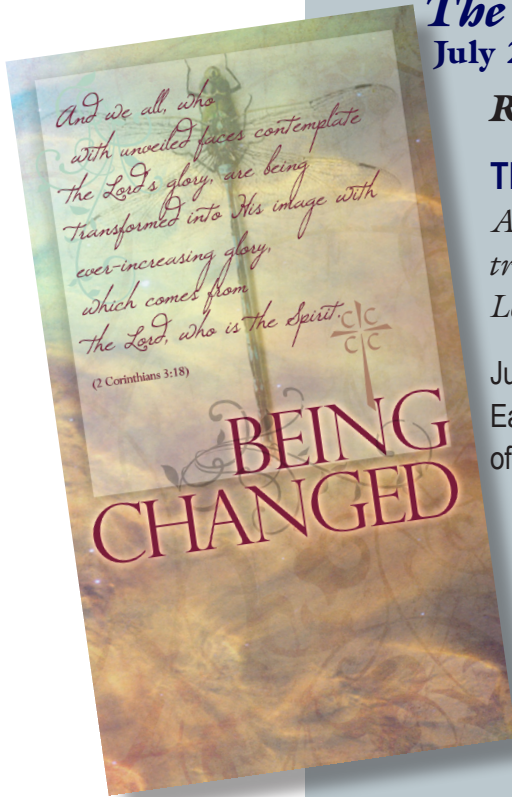
Rev. Dr. Ron Hamilton,  
CCCC Conference Minister

#### TUES EVENING:

Rev. Alvin Helms,  
Pastor, Carlsbad Community Church, Carlsbad, CA

#### WED EVENING

Rev. Dr. Rob O'Neal,  
Founding pastor of Brookwood Community Church, Shakopee, MN (CCCC church plant)



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