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CONSERVATIVE  
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## AROUND THE CONFERENCE

# Recovering from Loss

by **Jonathan Colegrove**, *Area Representative for Connecticut and Rhode Island*

In Frank Capra's 1946 classic, "It's a Wonderful Life," George Bailey discovers what Bedford Falls would have been like if he had never lived. Churches rarely get the chance to test this "what if?" in reality. But the afternoon of December 7, 2013 proved to be the beginning of just such an opportunity for First Congregational Church of Pomfret, Connecticut.

Often described in Pomfret as "the little church with the big heart," First Congregational was in the midst of making needed repairs to the front entry of their 1828 Greek Revival building. That afternoon, pastor Thomas Crumb got a call from a parishioner that the building was on fire. Rev. Crumb's father had been a volunteer firefighter. So when he arrived, he could readily see, and "knew in my heart it was going to be a total loss, being an older building with a lot of empty space for fire to travel." All he and the many members who soon began arriving could do was watch the building slowly collapse and fall down.

At this writing, it has been three months since the fire, and the church is fully engaged in preparing to rebuild. Much is going on behind the scenes, but nothing is yet visible to the public. The demolition of

what remains of the building will begin in mid-April, with seven different committees needed to accomplish the rebuilding. This spring the building committee will finalize its choice of an architect. After that, the actual design and building work will begin.

It is impossible to replace a historic building filled with over 175 years of charm and memories. The people of First Congregational hope to be able to blend some of the former building's classic beauty into a new building offering more functionality and a more flexible space. Rev. Crumb relates that though there was a natural sadness and grieving over the loss of their building, the congregation is excited about meeting the challenges and opportunities which it has been presented.

"We have recognized and stated both publicly and privately our firmly held belief that the church is the people, not the building! We are looking to design a new building that will meet the needs of those who will follow us in faith in this place."

First Congregational has been having their own "It's a Wonderful Life" moment, as heartfelt support has come from the town, and especially from a private secondary school located directly across the street

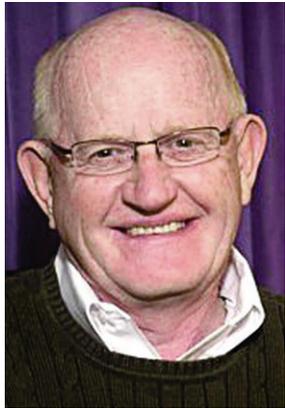


Historic Church before and after the Fire

## CM COMMENTS

## For Every Generation

**Ron Hamilton**, *Conference Minister*



Plans are being finalized for the 2014 Annual Family Conference, to be held at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Providence, Rhode Island on July 21–24. The theme for this year's gathering is *For Every Generation*.

*But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.* Psalm 33:11

We celebrated the 65th annual conference of the CCCC last summer. In doing so, we remembered God's faithfulness to our movement for over five generations. A generation is generally thought to be about 20 years. Here are the generations that have been around since the beginning of our Conference.

Sociologists have written on the character and values of each generation. We know that it is a challenge for one generation to understand the generations that have gone before and the generations that follow. But one thing is constant — God's ways and God's will are consistently applicable to each generation. The life-changing power of the Gospel is relevant to every person in every generation.

Title	Years of Birth	Current Age
Builders	1925-1945	Ages 70s - 80s
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Ages 50s - 60s
Generation X	1965-1979	Ages 30s - 40s
Generation Y	1980-1994	Ages 20s - early 30s
Millennials	1995-2010	Ages children - teens

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* Hebrews 13:8

While we celebrate the great heritage that we have in our Conference, we are working to develop a

ministry that is relevant in this generation. In a recent conversation with our Vice-President, Todd Venman, he said, "It's exciting to have a front row seat as we observe God's work in our Conference." These are exciting days in the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference.

The Board of Directors recently laid out a CCCC Way of Life built on these things:

- Our Passion — to live in obedience to Jesus as we love God, love others, and make disciples.
- Our Pathway — the Seven Guiding Values.
- Our Priorities — *Conference Care, Church Development* and *Church Multiplication*.

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, recently said that the Church of England is just "one generation away from extinction." Lord Carey laid the blame at the feet of church leaders who he said should be "ashamed" of their failure to bring youngsters into their services.

We are far more optimistic about the present work of God in our fellowship and His future work in and through our Conference. We rejoice in what the Lord is doing and are working to share the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to this generation and beyond. ♦

## NE REGIONAL NEWS

# Annual Family Conference Seminars

Terry Shanahan, NE Regional Minister



You may have heard — we are having the Annual Family Conference out here in New England this year in Warwick, Rhode Island, July 21–24! And we here in the Northeast have been very busy preparing for a wonderful time of worship, teaching and living life together.

Our local Arrangements Chairman, Rev. Bob McKenney says, “Our theme,

‘For Every Generation,’ flows throughout the week and works itself out in many tracks and workshops. We’ve also aligned our time together with the CCCC’s three major areas of focus: Conference Care, Church Development and Church Multiplication. There will be opportunities to hear about the work God is doing, and to think about how we might bring what we learn back to equip the saints at home for the work of ministry.”

As Seminar Coordinator for the conference, I want to give you a peek at what to expect. The seminars for this year’s annual get-together are broken down into our three areas of ministry priority as well; Conference Care, Church Multiplication and Church Development.

In our **Conference Care** track you will have the following offerings:

- *Pastoral Mentoring*, Rev. David Midwood
- *Introduction to the CCCC*, Rev. Nick Granitsas
- *Fill My House; Christ’s Luke 14 Mandate*, Shauna Amick and Molly Vasquez (from Joni and Friends)
- *Good Goodbyes for Pastors*, Rev. Ed Whitman
- *The Gift of a Pastoral Sabbatical*, Rev. Peter Balentine
- *Growing Churches During a Pastoral Transition; How to Strengthen Churches by Serving as an Intentional Interim Pastor*, Tom Harris, Lenn Zeller, Dick Carter

- *Rhythms of Discipleship, Work and Rest*, Rama Ziegenhals and Rev. Laurel Coolbaugh

In the **Church Multiplication** track you will have these offerings:

- *CCCC Overview Of Church Multiplication*, Rev. Jeff O’Guin, and various church planters
- *Multiple Expressions of Church Planting*, Rev. Jeff O’Guin
- *Building a Holy, Prolific, and Uncommonly Unified Lead Team*, Matthew Kruse

And in our **Church Development** track you will have the following:

- *Understanding Your Identity In Christ*, Rev. Ed Rinehart and Rev. Richard Cook
- *Rural Church Development for Every Generation*, Dr. Jason McConnell
- *Ten Reasons to Stay in a Small Church for 25 Years*, (or longer), Rev. Blake Brown
- *Media as Ministry: Using Technology for the Kingdom Of God*, Jeremy Peters
- *The Viability of a Small Group Ministry in the Local Church*, Marcia Moskal and Joel Bucklin
- *Creating an Intentional Evangelism System in Your Church*, Rev. Ryan Howell
- *Gospel-Centered Small Group Discipleship*, Rev. Nathan Hall
- *Process Evangelism and an Outward Focus*, Rev. Jon Paul

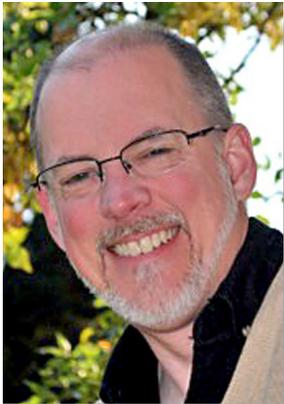
In addition, the **Women’s Ministry** will have Rev. Lisa J. Sfameni as their speaker during the seminar time.

All the seminars will be on Wednesday afternoon this year. We are excited about what God is preparing in advance for your visit. I can’t wait to see you all in Rhode Island! ♦

## CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

# A Hard Truth About Revitalization

By John Kimball, CCCC Director of Church Development



You know the old proverb: “You can lead a horse to water...” There is an extent to which this idea is also true for a local congregation. Many are the pastors who accepted a call to a church with great excitement and vision for what could be, only to find out that the congregation was not interested in progressing through the changes needed to make revitalized ministry a reality. It is important to note that not every such

scenario is due to an unwillingness on the part of the flock, but my point is that this kind of disinterest and unwillingness can (and often does) inhibit desperately needed revitalization.

I have talked with many pastors and churches that communicate a recognized need for change. They may see their congregation getting older. They may be concerned that few or no new people are coming into their church. They may be faced with the realities of dwindling financial support. But whatever the reasons, they see their future, and it’s not what they want. One would think that the urgency they sense would produce an openness to pursue revitalization — but this is not always the case. The “idea” of revitalization may receive widespread acceptance, while at the same time, the changes required by the revitalization process are completely resisted. And if enough people band together in resistance (either consciously or unconsciously), revitalization becomes impossible.

In John’s gospel, we read this story:

*Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie — the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and*

*learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:1–6, Emphasis Mine)*

And as you see the man’s response to Jesus’ question, you get a sense that he is whining about his plight rather than aggressively pursuing a solution. Jesus cuts to the heart of the issue and commands him to get up and walk.

I had a revitalization conversation not long ago with someone who said to me, “I just want this church to still be around to bury me.” I wish this were an isolated incident, but it is not. Way too often, the “vision” of members in dwindling congregations is so self-centered it blinds them to the Commission of Christ. And it is precisely this kind of self-centeredness that can prevent any kind of lasting revitalization.

Following Jesus’ lead, my question in this article is for the body — not just the pastor: Do you really want to see your church flourish? I fully understand that the road may have significant challenges and require significant investment. My question is not about the hurdles we will have to clear — it’s about desire. What do you really want for the future of your church? Your answer is important.

This singular question gets to the heart of what is preventing many churches from a truly transformational impact on their communities. If too many people in a given congregation only envision a church that serves them and their needs, they will likely prevent the congregation from ever engaging their neighborhood in a fruitful and redemptive way. For good or ill, what the congregation wants has a huge impact on the church’s ministry.

As believers, we must all strive to align our personal desires with the desires (and commands) of our King. And He has a heart for the nations — one that seeks and saves the lost. If we are consumed with desires for self-benefit or self-comfort, it is likely that we will not make the sacrifices and decisions needed to refocus on the surrounding community for life and growth.

*So what do you want?* ♦

## CONFERENCE CARE

# Eyes on Jesus

By **Lenn Zeller**, (Volunteer) CCCC Director of Conference Care

Back in 1950, Helen Lemmel wrote what has become a classic Christian praise chorus. You will no doubt recognize these words:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth  
Will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

The song is a beautiful reminder that if we abide in Christ, if we stay connected to Him and keep our minds and hearts stayed on Him, then the concerns and difficulties of this earth will fade. In the light of His glory and grace, nothing else will seem so important, so critical, or so pressing. He is our strength and our security. He is our hope and joy. He is our focus, our purpose and our goal.

As we contemplate what He has done for us, as we remember how He died for our sins and rose to offer new and eternal life to all who believe, our hearts are filled with humble gratitude and abundant joy. And we will find the heartaches of this life lessening in their power over us and in their urgency. All is well in our souls in Christ, even when the circumstances around us are anything but.

What happens when churches slip into conflict and internal strife? We get our eyes off Jesus and onto the slights we have suffered, real or imagined. Rather than focusing our attention on what we have in Christ, we begin to fret about what we don't have. We turn over and over in our minds the insults and affronts we have suffered (or think we have suffered!) and forget all about how Christ suffered infinitely more for our sake. Make no mistake — the Enemy of our souls and of Christ's Church would like nothing more than for us to get our eyes off Christ and onto ourselves!

In the midst of conflict, we spend our time and energy seeking ways to defend our honor, to gain revenge, to strike back, or to assert our power and authority, rather than focusing our energies on loving God, loving others and making disciples. We forget the example of the meekness of Christ.

*He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*(Isaiah 53: 7)

*Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.*  
(1 Peter 2:23)

One important step for a congregation to take in working through its internal discord and disputes is to get their eyes, individually and corporately, back onto Jesus; to remember His example of meekness and humility; to get back to the work of ministry, within the body and to the community. Yes, we need to deal with the issues and personalities involved in the dispute. Yes, we need to work toward reconciliation and forgiveness. Yes, there may be occasions when discipline is required. But perhaps most of all, we need to turn our eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and remember His glory and grace. ♦



## STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

## Whose Money Are We Giving?

by Rev. Jim Behrendt, Senior Pastor, Eden Church, Muncie, Indiana

Recently we had a pastor from Liberia visit our church. Liberia is a nation that was ravaged by a civil war from which it has yet to recover. I asked the pastor what he enjoyed most about visiting the United States. His answer caught me by surprise. He said, "Hot water whenever I want and as much of it as I want." I assumed he would say something about the number of cars on the road, the homes we live in, the beauty of the churches or the abundance of food in the grocery stores. Instead, for him the most amazing thing about America was that he could take a hot shower whenever he wanted. It was a stark reminder to me that wealth is a matter of perspective.

The same can be said about stewardship. In far too many churches stewardship simply means "our church wants more money." Sure, most pastors during Stewardship Month include sermons on giving of your time and talents, but for most people in the pews stewardship eventually boils down to money. And who can blame people for thinking this way? After all, when are most stewardship sermons preached? In most churches it's when the annual pledge drive comes around or when revenues are falling behind budget.

Personally, I happen to believe that stewardship isn't about my money, my time or my talents. Stewardship is about something much more basic — and much more profound. Stewardship is an issue of ownership. In the Bible a steward was a servant who oversaw or managed the master's assets. The steward didn't own the assets. He simply man-

aged them. In today's terms we would probably call them financial managers. Financial managers don't own the assets they oversee. Instead, they have a duty to manage them in accordance with the desires of the owner. When it comes to stewardship, then, the question we ought to ask ourselves is whose money is it that I'm putting in the plate? Whose time am I offering to spend? Whose talents am I offering to use? The Scriptures would say that the answer to each question is that it is God's — it is God's money I am putting in the offering plate and it is God's time I am using in His service, and it is God's talents I am called to use. After all, according to the Scriptures everything we have belongs to God, including ourselves.

The constant and unending arguments Christians engage in about tithing — is tithing mandatory, should we tithe off our gross or net income, is tithing a minimum or maximum level, etc. — seem to be based on the assumption that it's only the money we place in the offering plate that belongs to God. If we begin, however, with the biblical understanding that everything (including ourselves) belongs to God, then the question shifts from "How much should I give?" to "Lord, what would you have me do with what you have entrusted me with?" It's all a matter of perspective. ♦



## FROM THE CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

# A Letter from the President

**Paul C. McPheeters, *President***

As the president of the Conference, I want to communicate with you some of the exciting things that are going on in the Conference at the moment.

## **PASTORING OUR PASTORS:**

Our dream is to equip our local pastors to live out the CCCC Way of Life (see below) with their congregations. To realize this dream, we are creating local Pastoral Communities facilitated by trained Community Pastors. The result of this dream will be healthy pastors leading healthy churches that multiply themselves. In May we will hold our first training event for about 20 Community Pastors. The training will guide these people as they launch their local Pastoral Communities in the Fall.

## **MINISTRY DIRECTORS:**

We are also pursuing ways to provide leadership for our ministry priorities of Conference Care, Church Development, and Church Multiplication. For many years we have had the goal of having full-time directors for each of these priorities but have not been able to fund all of these positions. It is apparent that God is calling us to work within our current funding and create three part-time positions for 2015. We are currently rewriting the job descriptions in preparation for the 2015 budget and ministry plans that will be presented at this summer's Annual Family Conference in Rhode Island.

## **FINANCES:**

Speaking of budgets! In December, our Treasurer, Bob McKenney, and I wrote to you about our financial need as we came to the end of the year. It is a joy to report to you that we had the best year-end giving in the history of the Conference! It is also a joy to report that the first quarter of 2014 has continued to see strong monthly giving! On behalf of the staff and the Board, I thank you for taking seriously our commitment to a "shared life and shared mission," and for giving as one way of sharing that mission. For our part, we want you to know that we have trimmed the budget, put a variety of policies and practices in place to handle our finances with excellence, and completed a full audit for 2012. We are now in the midst of a complete audit for 2013. The auditors are pleased with all that we have done in recent years to tighten our fiscal oversight and controls.



## **ALIGNMENT OF MINISTRIES:**

As we live out the CCCC Way of Life, we are seeking to orient all that we do around that way of life. We are not pursuing "change for the sake of change." We are simply following God's leading to be what He has called us to be, and to do what He has called us to do. Thus we have re-oriented our Board meetings and our Annual Business meetings around the priorities of our CCCC Way of Life. If you come to Rhode Island for the Annual Conference this summer, you will discover that it, too, is in the process of being changed to reflect our way of life. And we are looking at our structure and committees as described in our by-laws and proposing changes that will better support what God is calling us to be and to do.

These are exciting times to be sharing life and ministry! I invite you to join me, and the wonderful team of leaders God has brought together in our Conference, as we simply seek to love God, love others, and as we go, make disciples.

I hope to see you this summer in Rhode Island! ♦

### **THE CCCC WAY OF LIFE**

Our Passion: The Irreducible Core

*Live in obedience to Jesus as we love God,  
love others, and make disciples.*

### **Our Pathway: The Seven Guiding Values**

1. A culture of believing prayer and intercession
2. Healthy Pastors
3. Healthy disciple-making churches
4. Healthy church multiplication
5. A community that lives out a shared life and mission
6. A culture of peacemaking and reconciliation
7. A membership reflective of the harvest field's diversity

### **Our Priorities:**

*Conference Care, Church Development &  
Church Multiplication*

## WORLD OUTREACH

# God Moves Us Around

by Karl and Ann Olsson



Editor's Note: *Last month we shared God's call upon Chris Surber and family to leave their ministry here and the states and move to Haiti to minister there. This month we share the Olssons' family story as they leave Haiti*

*after 16 years there to resettle here.*

## HELLO FROM ELKTON, FLORIDA

**CHANGE** — it is a big word when you are in the middle of it. Five weeks ago we left Haiti after 16 years of ministry there, and settling down in Elkton, very close to St. Augustine. Changes — new address, new phone numbers, learning how to live in the US again, and finding our way around. We are searching for a new church, meeting new people, learning new ways of doing things, unpacking our 'stuff' and trying to find a place for everything as we settle into our new home, and trying not get too overwhelmed!

We have watched God's hand of guidance as He helped us move from Haiti to Florida, grateful for Missionary Flights International that flew all our totes and boxes with us to Florida, having a wonderful home to live in, and making connections with Ann's niece and nephew who live in this area, getting to know them after 40 years. God is good all the time and all the time God is good.

We do however, love having 24/7 electricity, good roads, no dust, good water with no bleach, and an infrastructure that works. As we left Haiti, the Lord

provided a wonderful couple to move into our home, good friends who are giving Mike our dog a good home, selling/giving our household goods to others, and wonderful, precious support from our Haitian brothers and sisters and fellow missionaries.

Another change is having new and different responsibilities with Convoy of Hope. We are still working within the Children Feeding Initiative as we were before, but in different ways. We would be the leaders taking pastor groups to Haiti to see what COH does (as opposed to when we lived in Haiti, and meeting these groups at the airport) and show them what COH is doing in the schools and orphanages. Also, Karl, formerly a soil scientist with the USDA, will work directly with COH's professor of soil science and Haitian agronomists in the Agricultural Project. From time to time, also we will call donors and pastors who are interested in Haiti to encourage them to 'come and see' what's happening. We will also participate what is called 'One Day,' a community outreach through the churches to receive help in various ways (fun times for the kids, haircuts, health and dental screening, job placement assistance, hot meals, etc.). Karl may have the opportunity to go to Haiti in May with the Agricultural Project, but this is not confirmed yet. But this gives you an idea of what our future holds with COH. But our leaders have also told us to get settled and rest some before we start again, and for that we're very grateful.

**NOT CHANGING** — something that hasn't changed is that Berean Mission Alliance, our 501(c)(3), will continue to receive our support funds, and their information is below. We are very grateful for this blessing.

As we close this chapter of our lives and open another, we want to highlight some of what the Lord enabled us to do in Haiti with your love, prayers, and

Moves *cont on pg 8.*

financial support. Here is a short list of what YOU participated in with us:

- 1998 — Developed a guesthouse for adoptive parents, families, and work teams.
- 1999–2009 — Pastor of Quisqueya Chapel.
- 2010 onward — Convoy of Hope: guesthouse, pastor groups, donor groups, special events.

Also:

- Karl — Taught Pastor Seminars for Haitian pastors.
- Ann — Managed pharmacy for medical groups and teams; also assisted with LACC (Latin America Child Care, sponsorship for children in school).
- And — Discipling Haitian young people and fellow missionaries with their needs.
- Relief Funds — enabled us to help Haitians: build homes (even before the earthquake), send children to school, send young people to attend universities, find jobs, start businesses, meet medical needs, listen to dreams, and most special, pray with them.

Change and new beginnings need prayer, and your prayers are invaluable to us... *thank you.*

We will be going to New England in June, headquartered in Brattleboro, Vermont. Our purpose is to meet with as many of you as we can, to meet with pastors of churches who support us and answer any questions you may have. Thank you again for being a part of our work and ministry. Please note below, our new address and phone number.

In HIM,

*Karl and Ann* ♦

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**ANNUAL FAMILY CONFERENCE**

**Annual Family Conference for Everybody**

**2014 CCCC ANNUAL YOUTH CONFERENCE**

**“LET’S GO FISHING!”**

*Matthew 4:19–20*

**Speaker: Larry Schell**

Larry Schell is an avid fisherman on the North Shore of Boston. In addition, he is the senior pastor at the Middleton Congregational Church in Middleton, Massachusetts, and the chaplain at Covenant Christian Academy in West Peabody, Massachusetts. Larry has been in ministry for twenty years, and throughout his entire ministry he has worked with youth in one way or another. He brings a lot of energy to this year’s conference, and is excited to tackle a four-part series with the youth based on Jesus epic invitation, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Larry has been married to Mariann for 22 years and has two kids: Luke, a freshman at Palm Beach Atlantic University, and Emma, a freshman at Covenant Christian Academy.

Larry writes, “I am psyched to spend some time with the PK’s and CLK’s (church leader kids) of the CCCC. It will be a unique four days that will offer both decompression and challenge for the next generation! Oh, and did I mention the beach day?! *See you in Rhode Island!*” ♦

## LETTER OF RESPONSE— SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Last month we published an article by Ted Bradshaw on Jesus' inviting Peter to walk on the water. (See *Something to Think About*.) We invited responses to the article. The following response was received from CCCC pastor David Green. We invite other responses to this and to any of our articles, but especially the *Something to Think About* essays.

Editor:

You invited observations on Mr. Bradshaw's article in the March Foresee.

Here are a few.

1. We need to be careful in drawing a straight line from the life and ministry of Jesus and his disciples to ourselves. The book of Acts and the epistles intervene with their precise explanations of who Jesus was and what his mission on earth entailed, especially with the future apostles. For they held a unique place in the history of redemption that is unrepeatable as to Christ's office as Redeemer and the apostles as founders of the Christian faith in the world — including the gospel message's confirmation by miraculous signs.

2. Closely related to this is the fact that external signs, i.e. the visibly miraculous, often caused wonder in people (see all through the Gospel narratives), but they never changed a heart, either from being dead in trespasses and sins to eternal life or to a higher state of holiness in believers. Thousands saw Jesus' miracles and remained in their sins.

3. We should also note that biblical miracles occur most often in situations where they merely aggravate unbelief in God's Word. The ministries of Moses, Elijah and Elisha — so filled with signs — were generally accompanied by unbelief or a temporary reform that soon lapsed into the same or a worse condition of disobedience and lawlessness.

This is clearest with our Lord, who shortly following three years of continu-

ous miracles of every kind and climaxing with his raising Lazarus from the dead, was hailed as the Son of David, but on the following Good Friday he was jeered and given over to crucifixion by the prevailing voices of many of those who had praised him days before.

4. Miracles are the sovereign disposition of God (see particularly Hebrews 2:2–3). In addition to the point just made above, in the ministries of the prophets who worked them (and only prophets — not priests or kings were vehicles for God's miracles), they were intended to reinforce their words. So that if the word from God was not effective, perhaps a sign would be effective to bring faith in the word. This was certainly true in the life of our Lord Jesus.

Jesus' signs also showed God's compassion for those in distress, often in spite of their unbelief.

5. Further, the pastoral letters of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus do not speak of working miraculous signs, expecting them or commissioning others to do them. Rather Paul instructed these men as his dear disciples to teach and live out the word of the gospel in all purity and holiness with compassion and continual service as the best demonstration of God's power and grace. In this way they would fulfill their ministries, save themselves and their hearers (1Timothy 4:16).

6. Thus the emphasis on expecting the miraculous should fall on our crying out to God for the greatest of all miracles: the

conversion of a human soul from darkness to light, from enmity with God to peace with him. Conversion and sanctification are entirely the miraculous but also the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit in the soul, normally using as his tool the read or preached Word of God. To this all Scripture bears eloquent witness.

This is surely to what Christ referred when he told the eleven "Greater works than these will you do because I go do the Father" (John 14:12). And what was the evidence for this statement? ANSWER — for starters, 3000 converted under Peter's preaching at Pentecost and the astonishing success of the preaching of the gospel among the very Jews — including many priests (Acts 6:7) who had called for Jesus' crucifixion.

With the miraculous it is never a question of what God can do but what he normally does. That miraculous signs may still occur is certainly possible and they have occurred, but always and only when God sovereignly chooses to intervene in some way, usually for reasons stated above.

So may we devote ourselves to prayer, that we might be holy and righteous instruments, such as God has used in the past, to make his word effective for the conversion of unbelievers and for sanctifying and energizing God's people to be living sacrifices, holy, pleasing to God (Romans 12:1–2) and thereby the best testimony to God's saving power in the world.

Yours by grace, *David Green* ♦

**CHANGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

**PASTORAL CHANGES**

- Haverhill, MA West Congregational Church\*  
Eric Lindahl (*Worship Pastor*)
- Haverhill, MA West Congregational Church\*  
Todd Becker (*Pastor to Children & Families*)

**PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- Parkersburg, IA First Congregational\*  
(*Associate Pastor*)
- LaMoille, IL First Congregational Church\*
- Sulphur Springs, IN Sulphur Springs Christian Church  
(*Family Life Minister*)
- Douglas, MA Second Congregational Church\*
- Cook, MN Ashawa Chapel\*  
(*Part-time*)
- Norwood, MN Church of Peace\*  
(*Part-time*)
- Beulah, ND Beulah Congregational Church\*
- Berthold, ND Berthold Baptist Church (ABC)
- Taylor, ND Taylor Ecumenical Parish (AFLC)
- Scottsbluff, NE Emmanuel Congregational Church\*
- Scottsbluff, NE Plymouth Congregational Church\*
- Cambridge, NY Coila Church\*
- Inwood, NY Community Bible Church\*  
(*Part-time*)
- Beaver Springs, PA Christ Church (EFCA)
- Reynoldsville, PA Paradise Community Church (UCC)
- Orwell, VT First Congregational Church  
(Independent) (*Part-time*)

\* = Conference member  
+ = In process

**PROMOTIONS TO GLORY**

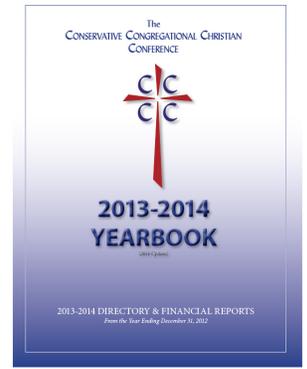
**OBITUARIES**

*Robert William Baker*, a retired CCCC pastor, passed away March 13, 2014 in Bozeman, Montana. He was born Sept. 10, 1933 in Boston, Massachusetts. Robert was a pastor from 1955-2001, at one point serving Christ Evangelical & Reformed Church in Hardin, Montana.

*Philip Elliott Webster*, CCCC Area Representative for Maine, passed away on April 5, 2014. Phil was born on July 4, 1936, in Wakefield, Rhode Island, attended Providence Barrington Bible College and graduated from New Brunswick Bible Institute in Canada. He and Erna served 55 years in the ministry, including 25 years of ministry to international students at numerous college campuses through ISI. He also pastored North Collins Congregational Church in North Collins, New York. ♦

**Yearbook Update Now Available**

A new edition of the 2013-2014 Yearbook includes e-mail and website addresses. New in this edition is a membership section organized alphabetically rather than by membership categories. The 2012 Auditor's report that was unavailable this fall is also included.



A self-print version is available under the resources tab at [www.cccusa.com](http://www.cccusa.com). Order a professionally printed copy by contacting the Home Office. Cost is \$15 and includes shipping.

The CCCC Yearbook is produced semiannually. The first edition is available in the fall after the Annual Family Conference when new members are selected and the slate of officers is approved. An update is produced after the ministerial questionnaires are processed at the close of the calendar year. *Thank you for your assistance to keep our records accurate and up to date!*

## CHURCH TESTIMONY

## Lake View Church Is NOT Dead!

by **Bill Balisteri**



I am thrilled and Lake View Community Church is overjoyed to have restored our affiliation with the CCCC. As of March 14, we were accepted back. We had been pushed into leaving. Last June, I was one of three members left. Three people wanted to shut us down and turn the building into a community center, with one of those people as head of the non-profit and the pastor to stay in the parsonage as an employee of the organization. We are in a rare growing area in New York, and I couldn't see the wisdom of shutting down the church. I convinced one 51-year member to stand with me and seek help.

Through my former pastor of our previous church we contacted Dayle Keefer, the Area Rep for the CCCC. He and a retired pastor at his church drove up that day, and we decided to continue operations. They didn't hesitate to help us, regardless of our membership status. This said much to us about the organization and Who was truly leading them.

Others personally attacked us privately and publicly over the decision, but God quickly confirmed what we were doing. His word and prayers and strength from the Spirit lifted us up and protected us from bitterness and reciprocation.

Twenty former members came back the second week and a young lady gave her heart to Christ. One of the former members had just received a letter saying that a CD (unknown to us, not in our QuickBooks records) was going into abandonment status and we needed to contact them. I was the youth leader before, through, and after the shutdown. Even though

we lost three children, the day after the meeting nine children came to hear the words of the gospel, and the same core of 8–11 kids has consistently attended our youth group. The Lord provided us with an interim pastor, finances, encouragement, children, joy, and a congregation of people with a variety of gifts and talents who were hungry to get back to God's work at their home church.

Five years prior to this, my wife and I felt the Holy Spirit's calling to leave our home church and move to Lake View. We loved our church and pastor and sought his advice. He said that if we felt led to be there God had work for us there. As things got bad, the calling from the Spirit was still just as clear, though from a human standpoint I didn't understand what I was doing there and what God's purpose was for us was

In His time, God revealed some of His purpose for our being there. We are now approaching our first semi-annual meeting since the restoration, and we have regained much of the ground Satan tried to take. We are in the process of searching for a permanent pastor to shepherd our flock, and looking forward with great joy and anticipation to the work that God has for us in this mission field. I am seeking formal training to be better prepared for youth ministry here and to prepare me for full-time ministry. If the Lord is willing to make a way for this, my desire is to reach many, sharing the Gospel with all that I am.

Again, I praise and thank God for the CCCC and the work you are doing, and our entire congregation thanks you. We are looking forward to serving side by side with you in the great work of the Gospel for many years to come, Lord willing!

A man joyfully wearing many church hats, your brother in Jesus Christ, *Bill Balisteri* ♦

## HEALTH NEWS

## TIA or Stroke?

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



Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIAs) are a warning sign of a future stroke. Sometimes referred to as a mini-stroke because the symptoms are like a stroke but do not last long. A TIA occurs when the blood flow to a part of the brain is blocked or reduced, most often from a blood clot. After a short time, the blood flows again and the symptoms disappear. With a stroke the blood flow does not resume and there is permanent damage to the brain cells.

TIAs need to be taken seriously, and prompt medical attention is strongly advised.

Symptoms of a TIA are similar to a stroke — generally a sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body. A person may also experience confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, trouble seeing, walking, dizziness or loss of balance.

Call 911 if you experience any of these symptoms or see these symptoms in someone else. A medical professional needs to evaluate whether it is a stroke or a TIA.

Prevention of a future stroke is the goal in treating someone who has experienced a TIA. Testing will be done to determine the exact cause of the blockage. Lifestyle changes will be recommended, including diet and exercise and quitting smoking and limiting alcohol. Medications may be ordered to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease, as well as prevention of blood clot formation or other conditions found on exam.

Be safe and let someone know if you experience any symptoms of a TIA. ♦

Source: [http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=tia&printer\\_friendly=1](http://www.stroke.org/site/PageServer?pagename=tia&printer_friendly=1)

*Loss cont from pg 1*

from where First Congregational once sat. Sunday services are being held in a beautiful Gothic-style chapel on the school's campus. Sunday school classes are being held in some of the school's classrooms. "Even as the church was burning, school officials told us we could use the chapel for as long as we need it. If something like this had to happen we couldn't have been better cared for." The Pomfret Senior Center has become temporary home to several monthly and Saturday church meetings. The church has been blessed with many expressions of support and encouragement and giving.

Rev. Crumb notes, "Our needs our great, but our God is greater." Though the church was appropriately insured, insurance policies do have caps, and it is likely First Congregational will need to raise upwards of \$500,000 to supplement the insurance settlement.

Those wishing to make a donation to the rebuilding effort are encouraged to visit the First Congregational web page at [fc-pomfret.org](http://fc-pomfret.org) and either use the PayPal option there or send a donation to its mailing address. First Congregational will celebrate its 300th anniversary next year. The church was officially chartered and recognized on October 26, 1715, when Ebenezer Williams, the first pastor, passed his ordination council. Rev. Crumb optimistically notes, "We have a hope, but not a guarantee, that October 26, 2015, will not only be the official 300th anniversary of the church but may be also the dedication of a new building." ♦

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your contributions!

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

[kenandjoy@bellsouth.net](mailto: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.

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**JULY 21-24, 2014**

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*See YOU in Rhode Island!*



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