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CONSERVATIVE
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CONFERENCE

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CM COMMENTS

A Culture of Believing Prayer and Intercession

by Conference Minister Ron Hamilton

In a complex world it is often the simple things that provide the greatest challenge. I have found that to be true in my life, and understand that there is no greater challenge to my spiritual growth than the simple words of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, *Pray constantly*. Other familiar versions read, *Pray without ceasing*. These words are followed by the teaching, *Give thanks in all circumstances*. (1 Thessalonians 5:18). This helps us understand that we are to make prayer a part of the fiber of our lives and pray in every circumstance of life.

We believe that the Lord has called us to develop a culture of believing prayer and intercession in the Conference. This is a core value that drives the ministry of the CCCC in this generation and is the foundation of all that we do together. The Biblical basis for this outcome includes these words: "The Church is to come before Him continually with spiritual sacrifices of praise (Hebrews 13:15), the sacrifice of our own lives (Romans 12:1), and fervent intercession for one another and for His Kingdom to come in this world (1 Peter 5:7; James 5:13–18; Matthew 9:36–38)."

The starting point of developing a culture of prayer and intercession is the daily lives of our pastors and their families. We are challenged to begin each day with prayer and include prayer in all of the activities of our lives. Husbands and wives should pray together and teach their children how to pray. Families are strengthened as they pray over their relationships, their schedules and activities, their finances, and all of their plans.

Prayer then extends to our life together as the Body of Christ. Church prayer must go far beyond a part of the order of worship and an agenda item in our business meetings. Prayer becomes the source of strength for a church as groups gather for prayer on a regular basis. The plans of a church honor the Lord when church leaders make prayer a regular part of their business and decision-making processes. Church ministry is made effective as members pray over their programs and works of outreach.

We then gather as members of the Conference and join together in prayer. Our leaders support each other as they pray together and

seek God's wisdom for the life and ministry of the Conference. Pastors gathered in fellowship and community pray for each other and ask God to strengthen and guide their lives, their families and their ministries. Our public gatherings are characterized by times of sincere prayer and intercession.

We have built prayer into the core and fiber of the ministries of the CCCC. Our Conference Care ministry focuses on prayerfully supporting our pastors and church leaders. Our Church Development ministry emphasizes that prayer is the first priority for a church that wants to refocus its ministry. Our mission of Church Multiplication is driven by prayer for our planters and the mission field that they are reaching.

It's a simple but profound truth, "**Pray constantly!**"



NE REGIONAL NEWS



Pray Without Ceasing

Terry Shanahan, *NE Regional Minister*

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)

Last month many FORESEE articles were focused on our irreducible core of “Loving God, Loving Others and Making Disciples.” Clearly these are Jesus’ instructions to us, and out of obedience we must be a people who follows His commands. It is in further obedience that as Christ-followers we must be a people of prayer. Our number one guiding value in the CCCC is “A culture of believing prayer and intercession.” Jesus not only instructs us in prayer but He models it. As followers of Jesus it is clear we would be disobedient if we didn’t instruct and model prayer as well.

The premise of Lloyd John Ogilvie’s book, *Intimate Prayer*, is that intimate prayer is a conversation with God. Conversations grow out of relationship, and the deeper the relationship, the deeper the conversation. Our conversation with God grows out of His love for us, and our loving Him with all of our mind, body, soul and strength. The deeper we grow in relationship to Christ, the deeper our conversation with Him will be.

In the fall 2014 publication of *Leadership Journal*, Max Lucado reinforces this when he says, “A prayer is simply an honest conversation with God. A good prayer creates a sense of communion between the one who prays and the one who hears the prayer. At our core, we are afraid of being left alone. Ever since Adam and Eve hid in the bush we have all battled with this sense of distance between us and God. So a good prayer reestablishes a sense of communion with God. We know we are not alone.” In a loving, intimate relationship with God we can share our hearts in prayer.

Our irreducible core, “Loving God, Loving Others and Making Disciples,” is hollow without believing prayer and intercession. We pray in belief that we have a loving God who not only hears our prayers but answers them. At the core of our intercession is our heartfelt love for the lost, and we know with assurance that we can intercede for others and for His Kingdom. With an anguish that can only

CHURCH DEVELOPMENT



Prayer and Culture

By John Kimball,
Director of Church Development

In our CCCC Family, we say we’re developing a “culture of believing prayer and intercession.” It’s one of our Seven Guiding Values. In order for this to be a realized value of our Conference, it has to be a realized value of our local churches. But in my work with many churches, I see that it is an aspirational value instead of a core value. I have yet to meet anyone who believes we need less believing prayer and intercession, but I meet a lot of pastors, leaders and church folks who are dissatisfied with their current prayer life. Clearly, this needs to be a major focus for us.

Regardless of the starting point, I tell every congregation with which I work in Church Development that intercessory prayer is a mandatory foundation for church health and ministry fruit. Several folks have heard me say, “If you won’t gather to pray, there’s really very little we can do to help you.” It’s not a matter of recognizing a church’s prayer warriors — we praise God for these folks and realize that we’d already be dead without them. Rather, it’s something systemic we are seeking — consistently involving the whole congregation; otherwise, why do we talk about it in terms of “culture.”

Culture dictates virtually everything about a people: clothing, music, food, lifestyle, belief system, etc. Every local church has a culture. That culture is a mixture of things coming from ethnicity, community and what we believe about God. And it is this culture that determines what we believe about and how we practice prayer and intercession. If intercessory prayer is a real value for the church, then there will be ample time, resourcing and sacrifice given to keep that priority. The people will gather to intercede for their neighborhood and city. The people will take time daily to practice personal intercession. The church budget will include funding for prayer resourcing and support. But the reality is that most congregations struggle to get a handful of people to gather for prayer, and when they gather, most prayers will be about people and relatives of the church family rather than their community mission field. And I can only think of one or two churches I’ve met in my career that have made the resourcing of intercessory prayer an annual budgetary priority. It’s just not our culture anymore.

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION



Pray Big

Rob O'Neal,

Director of Church Multiplication

Years ago friends of mine bought Mrs. Keen's house. We called it Mrs. Keen's house, because she lived there for decades before she died. The small house had beautiful details and fit my friends' needs perfectly. There was just one problem — Mrs. Keen had been a chain smoker. The smell overpowered you the moment you walked into the house.

My friends started cleaning as soon as they got the keys. They washed walls, and the water ran brown with nicotine. It took weeks of cleaning and painting to get the smell out of the house. Smoking so much leaves an imprint on a house.

Prayer can leave a similar impact. When we pray in a spot over many years, it leaves an imprint. People walking into buildings that have been used as churches will sometimes note that the building has a special, reverent feel. It may have been abandoned for years or even find itself turned into a restaurant or museum, but the aroma of prayer and God's presence still permeates the space.

Chain-smoking helps me to understand believing prayer and intercession. We want to pray for one another and over what God is doing in this world with similar focus and urgency. Jesus says that praying over what his Father is doing in the world should be a regular part of our prayers. In his model prayer (Matthew 6:10), he tells us to pray, Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus' words help me to understand that God wants me to pray about the expansion of his kingdom in the same ways that I pray for forgiveness and daily bread.



When I think about God's Kingdom expanding, I think of Immanuel Church in Chelmsford, Massachusetts. They were recently given the gift of a building in nearby Westford. The

Westford Bible Church was closing its doors, and the remaining congregation wanted to see their building used for the kingdom, so they gave it to Immanuel Church.

BIG cont on pg 4

CONFERENCE CARE



Answering Accusations

By Lenn Zeller,

Director of Conference Care

*For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth
of the deceitful have opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
and fought against me without cause.
In return for my love they are my accusers,
but I give myself to prayer. (Psalm 109:2–4 NKJV)*

The language in Psalm 109, quoted above, uses the legal terminology of that day. It is quite likely that the psalmist was a defendant in a courtroom setting. What charges were being leveled against him is unknown, as the psalm itself does not say. But it appears that someone is making some kind of civil or even criminal complaint against the author. Furthermore, according to the psalm, the charges are deceitful, without cause and totally fabricated. According to the *New Geneva Study Bible* footnote for the above poem, the "psalmist stands before a corrupt court falsely accused of a crime." To make matters even worse, the accuser is evidently someone whom the psalmist had treated with much love and kindness. His attackers were once his friends! But they have returned his love with evil and hatred.

What an uncomfortable place to be! What heartache, inner turmoil and anxiety such a predicament must have caused. The psalmist makes no effort to hide his strong feelings against those who bring these contrived charges against him. Clearly he is hurt, confused and angry. Who wouldn't be, in similar circumstances? But whereas many of us would be sorely tempted to lash out, to respond in kind, or to go on the attack in defense, notice what the psalmist did... he gave himself to prayer! *In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer. (Psalm 109:4)*

The psalmist responded to the unfair attacks of his friends by taking his heartache to the Lord, openly pouring out his hurt and anger before God and then resting in the Lord's sovereign judgment. The desire for vengeance and judgment against the false accusers expressed in the psalm is quite understandable. Who

ACCUSATIONS cont on pg 9

AROUND THE CONFERENCE

Reaching for Families with Children

from Tom Mathisen, Area Rep for Northern Illinois

Zion Church of Freeport, Illinois recently welcomed Scott Werntz as their new Associate Pastor. Senior pastor Gardy Cronk is now in his eighth year of ministry there. About ten years ago the 150 year-old church moved from downtown to the outer edges of Freeport,



where they built a new building, better enabling

them to serve the Freeport area. The congregation is an active, but older group, and Scott has been called to help bring growth with ministry to younger families.

Born in Freeport, Scott lived in the area through his high school graduation. He went on to Millikin University and Columbia College in Chicago, where he received his

Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre and television. Upon completion of college, Werntz moved to Hollywood, California and worked for Lorimar Telepictures on TV shows, "Family Matters," "Full House," "Knott's Landing" and "Dallas." After a few years in California, he moved back to Illinois and served as a college admissions counselor for Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois.

In 1991 Werntz relocated to Irving, Texas where he served for ten years as the Youth Pastor of Irving Bible Church. He founded "Spoken For International Youth Ministry" (www.spokenfor.org), a ministry to orphans and youth living in Russia, Africa, India and the United States in 2001. Leading teams who have ministered on short-term mission trips, Scott has made over 60 trips back and forth to Russia and Africa.

In addition to his work with Spoken For, Werntz serves on the board of Shepherd of the Ozarks, a Christian camp located near Mountain View, Arkansas and as the Creative Arts Consultant for several schools in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. He has directed dozens of Broadway-style musicals and has written several musicals, including "Live The Difference," for WORD Music Corp. Scott speaks throughout the country at conferences, camps, churches and schools. He has returned to Freeport, Illinois after being away for 30 years to serve

at Zion Church. *We welcome Scott Werntz to Zion Church and to the CCCC.* ♦



WITHOUT CEASING *cont from pg 2*

come from God's love for us we can storm the gates of Heaven with our prayers for our friends, co-workers and family who do not know Him.

As our number one guiding value, believing prayer and intercession is at the core of:

"Loving God, Loving Others and Making Disciples." ♦

BIG *cont from pg 3*

Pastor Dana Smith and the congregation have decided to send out a team to plant a new church in the building they have been given. This team is being led by Immanuel's associate pastor, Jonathan Romig. They have assembled a core team from Immanuel that is dedicated to starting the new church. A ministry team is guiding the group.

Please pray for this new church plant. Please pray that God will guide the ministry team in the many decisions they have to make. Please pray that the core team will grow and reach new believers in Westford. Please pray that this new church will become a vibrant congregation that makes disciples of Jesus for generations to come. Please pray that God will expand his kingdom in Westford, Massachusetts.

As we pray for God's kingdom to expand, let's pray regularly and fervently. Let's pray with intensity, expecting that God is going to do something big. May our prayers leave a mark. ♦

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT



The Importance of Context

by Ken McGarvey

I learned in college Bible classes that the Bible can never be understood without an understanding of context. Verses do not stand on their own. If words, phrases or verses did, we could make all kinds of ridiculous statements. Many of the verses Christians often quote don't really mean what they think, because they have been removed from their context.

Does God want us to multiply like crazy because He told us to be fruitful and fill the earth? Are we saved by selling all that we have and giving the money to the poor? Are we really told not to plan what we are going to say when we preach? Is it wrong for women to wear slacks because of something said in Deuteronomy? These and all other biblical statements must be understood in their historical, local and biblical context.

When we look up a verse somebody has quoted, or when we find something good in our reading, we must look at who said it, on what occasion, to whom was it said, why, what point was he or she trying to make? Does this have a direct correlation to me and my situation? If so, how do I understand it and how do I apply it? How does it fit into the teachings of the entire Bible? How do we harmonize it with other scriptures?

But the importance of context goes even beyond study of scriptures. The lawyer defending the slaves who had overpowered the crew of the *Amistad*, when he asked John Quincy Adams for help, was asked, "What is their story?" Adams added, "You cannot know anything about them until you know their story." Without a personal and historical

context, we cannot understand history, politics, people, or the Bible.

When Bill Clinton was elected President, he privately sought counsel from Richard Nixon on foreign relations. One of the things Nixon told him was, "Never criticize another world leader until you understand what he faces at home." In other words, understand the context of his beliefs and actions.

Many Christians are quick with opinions on political, social, economic and philosophical matters. But often what I hear or read is an attack on those we disagree with by people who have no understanding of the context of others' beliefs or actions. Life today is incredibly complex. Oversimplification cannot help. Life is not lived in a vacuum.

Opinion show hosts entertain their audiences by using sound bites (brief statements removed from their context) to condemn those with whom they disagree. They define issues in black and white and ignore the complexities that exist in all of life. They condemn those who hold opposing viewpoints and ridicule them. Their aim is to get their audience to experience fear and/or anger, so they will keep on tuning in (and supporting their sponsors).

We cannot fully understand the statements of leaders in any field without an understanding of the life context of their remarks. A person raised in an abusive home will likely reach adulthood with a different view of parents' rights than one raised in a healthy home environment. And both will have valid contributions to make on the subject.

The powerless will usually have a different view of government than the powerful. The idea of

fairness is seldom brought up by those with the upper hand. In fact, in almost all societies in world history, the weak were neglected or abused, seen as a burden on the "real people" of the society. Only since the gospel of Christ was brought to societies have protections arisen for the weak, the very young, the very old, the poor, the disabled, the sick. It is said that history is written by the victors. It may also be said that societies are governed by the strong, and in ways that support them.

Jesus did not give the same message to the rich ruler that he gave to Nicodemus. He did not give the same message to the Samaritan woman that he gave to Zacchaeus. He spoke to each of them on the basis of their own life experiences. So Paul's message never changed, but his approach differed at Antioch, at Corinth and at Athens, based on the cultural and historical context of these places.

The scriptures are plain in urging us to respond with obedience to God first, rather than yielding to the pressures of our culture. Nevertheless, a study of history (including the Old and New Testaments) indicates that in every age, followers of God tend to think and act largely in keeping with the pressures of the prevailing philosophies of their day. This in no way excuses them or us for disobeying the Word of God because of our customs; however, it should give us a little understanding of the pressures others have faced or even face today.

Whenever we share the good news of Jesus with others, we must use open ears to learn their story, and understand the life context into which Jesus must come. We can then share in love and with understanding and compassion the love of God. ♦

WORLD OUTREACH

Ministry in Haiti

by **Chris Surber** — *a CCCC minister who left his church in Virginia a few months ago and moved his family to Haiti, where they have begun to minister.*



HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING

We've been in Haiti for 1 month and already we see the seed God planted in our hearts nearly 2 years ago growing and bearing fruit as we live out the Gospel in Haiti together as a family!

MINISTRY UPDATES:

We are spending weekday mornings engaged in elementary education at The Agape Academy. Our kids have joined the children from the Agape House for school and we are helping as teachers.



- We are engaged in pastoral counseling and discipleship on a weekly basis with kids at God's Children Orphanage. Many of these kids have significant developmental and physical delays and disabilities, and most come from traumatic backgrounds. We are each taking specific children to counsel one on one and doing Bible classes.
- Our family has begun a relationship with the children at a local Haitian-run orphanage. We fed them breakfast one day this week and we are praying about future ministry with the kids in this very poor orphanage.
- On Sundays our family has been worshiping in a beautiful upstairs room at God's Children Orphanage along with other missionary families and the children of the orphanage. Chris is preaching there in English again this Sunday.

- This Sunday will be the first worship service in our Haitian church plant on the hill in Bo Lyce. This is where our journey in Haiti began with Christina's first mission trip here nearly 2 years ago. We have strong relationships on that hill and they have asked for us to plant a church there. Chris will be preaching through our good friend and translator Pastor Daniel. We will discuss a name for the worship gathering this week.
- Our current Matthew 25 project - rebuilding Denise's house - is almost complete. Michelle Brady has done a fantastic job raising funds and coordinating this project through Minadia (DaDa). We are planning several similar projects in Bo Lyce.
- February 23rd we will be doing an administrative seminar with the pastors of Legliz Ansamn (Churches Together). We will make a schedule for our family to attend worship services several Sundays this year at these Haitian churches for Chris to preach a message of church unity and Gospel vision in each of the churches. We will also be planning upcoming seminars. Through mentoring these

pastors and investing into discipleship among Haitian children we can plant seeds for a lasting impact in Haiti.

- We are always reaching out in small ways every day to spread the Gospel and be witnesses the to light of Christ. Contact us for more information.
- ## HOW YOU CAN HELP:
- **Pray!** God is doing all of this. We are in awe as we watch needed relationships appear, funds arrive, and hope cultivated in us and the Haitian people with whom we work!
 - **Send!** Perhaps you can do more to be a part of this work of God than you think. Every donation of time, talent, and treasure makes a difference.
 - **Go!** We would love to host a team – large or small – in Haiti to help us plant seeds Gospel seeds.

Follow us on Facebook to stay up to date. Visit our website (www.supplyandmultiply.com) for more information. Share our newsletter with a missions minded friend or church. We are glad to bring you into participation in what God is doing through our lives and grow together for the Gospel. Many Blessings in Christ! ♦

ANNUAL GATHERING

Location, Location, Location!

by Susan Moody, Local Arrangements Chair for the 2015 CCCC Annual Gathering

Transitional Pastor of the Congregational Church of Chester, VT

When I was writing papers in seminary, there were times I would do all my research and translation from the original language, and then I would get stuck. At a loss for where to begin, I would often start with the one thing that was easy to accomplish — the title page. One part done!

Location — this article started with that word. We are headed to Rochester, New York this summer for our Annual Gathering and I wanted to describe for you all that it has to offer. But I was stuck — so much to say and at a loss for where to begin. So I decided to start with a catchy title — figuring then the rest would just flow! I googled “rhymes with location” and as I read over the list, I realized that the Annual Gathering is about so much more than just the location!

Rochester, New York is a great city and it indeed has lots to offer! If you go to www.visitrochester.com you can check it out for yourself! There are over 100 family-friendly attractions, making Rochester a great place to visit. “Visit Rochester” has many resources to help you make the most of your trip.

And our hotel is a great location! The Hyatt Regency is within an easy walk of the downtown theater and museums, while remaining close to outdoor recreation spaces. With an indoor heated swimming pool, on-site restaurant, fitness center, and more, this hotel offers the perfect blend of location, style and amenities.

But anyway, back to my title! As I read the results of my Google search for “rhymes with location” — I realized anew that the Annual Gathering is about so much more than just the location! It is also about:

Adoration — spending time together worshipping God’s great name.

Contemplation — corporately and individually considering the Holy Spirit’s work in our hearts.

Conversation — around the table, in the hallways, on the elevator, over coffee.

Education — through workshops, seminars, keynotes and sermons.

Elation — at seeing friends new and old, at hearing what God is doing around the country and throughout the world!

Recreation — as we play and laugh together.

Restoration — when our weary souls are filled with renewed life.

Revelation — as God brings us deeper understanding of the familiar words of Scripture.

Rumination — time to think over all that we have been taught.

Sanctification — leaving the Annual Gathering looking a little more like Jesus than we did when we arrived.

Saturation — being filled to overflowing in heart and mind and soul and strength.

Socialization — sharing and listening to one another’s stories.

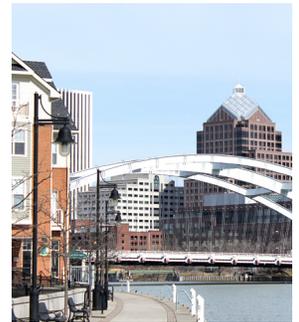
Vocation — finally being ready to return once more to work we do to fulfill the Kingdom calling God has placed on our lives.

So, of course, location matters — because that is where we will all be together, gathered in God’s name. But no matter where we are, the Annual Gathering just won’t be the same without you.

Won’t you come join us? ♦

**2015
CCCC ANNUAL
GATHERING
ROCHESTER, NY**

JULY 20-23, 2015



REFORMED CONGREGATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

2015 RCF Pastors' Conference

(The Reformed Congregational Fellowship involves some of our CCCC pastors and others. Co-Moderators of the group are CCCC pastors Paul Wanamaker and Kirk van der Swaagh. The fellowship meets each spring in New England. We are pleased to announce their conference, that others in the CCCC may wish to know about it and participate. — Editor)

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

How would you answer that question? An easy answer: "I believe what the Bible says." But it's not as simple as that, is it? History is witness to many who have cited the Bible as the basis of their creed who go on to prove that the content of their confession could not be countenanced by the word of God.

What do you believe? The apostle Paul would have expected an answer that reflected, "the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me" (2 Timothy 1:13).

What do you believe? How we answer the question will shed light on what we understand to be the substance of "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

In reality, every church, every minister, has a creed, whether it's acknowledged or not. Dr. Carl Trueman, in his recent work, *The Creedal Imperative*, cites a pastor who from his pulpit, with a Bible held aloft, simply said, "The Bible and the Bible alone is our only creed and our only confession." As it turns out, this church was characterized by teaching Calvinism, Dispensationalism, and a Plymouth Brethren form of church government. So, in fact, there was a creed and confession... it just wasn't written down and subject to public examination and assessment!

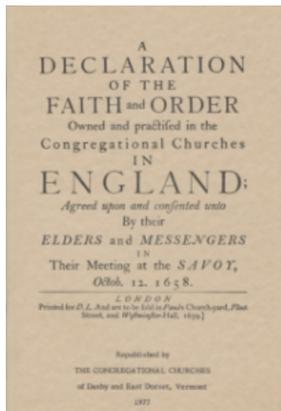
Instruments that God has graciously provided to sustain the "pattern of sound words," the once-delivered faith, are the creeds and confessions of the church. Whether it's the Nicene Creed, Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession, or the Savoy Declaration of Faith, such thoughtful and hard won summations of biblical faith keep us on track. They provide a protective doctrinal fence for the safety of church leadership and the congregation.

SO, WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?

The annual Reformed Congregational Fellowship Pastors' Conferences are born out of the conviction that creeds and confessions are vital to the fundamental health and security of the church. Won't you join us April 14–16 at the Salvation Army Wonderland Conference Center in Sharon, Massachusetts for the 2015 RCF Pastors' Conference? We will be engaging chapter 21 of the Savoy, a thought-provoking consideration of the "liberty which Christ has purchased for believers" and the corresponding freedom of the conscience from the doctrines of men.

More details, including registration information, click on this link: www.reformedcongregational.org And God willing, we'll see you there,

Paul Wanamaker & Kirk van der Swaagh ♦



**2015 RCF
PASTORS'
CONFERENCE**

APRIL 14–16, 2015

**SALVATION ARMY
WONDERLAND
CONFERENCE
CENTER**

**SHARON,
MASSACHUSETTS**

PROMOTIONS TO GLORY

Obituary

Henry A. Vieth Jr., 91, of Fairbury, Nebraska, died December 13, 2014 at Gardenside LTC in Fairbury. He was born May 27, 1923 in Sparta, Wisconsin. They lived on the Von Haden family farm until he felt called to the ministry. He attended Wartburg College, Arizona Bible Institute, and later Dickinson State College. He was a CCCC pastor.

Henry served churches in Glendale, Arizona; Nashua, Iowa; Glen Ullin, North Dakota; Fairbury, Nebraska; Fort Collins, Colorado; Seward, Nebraska; and Coleridge, Nebraska. ♦

CHANGES & OPPORTUNITIES

PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES

Greeley, CO	St Paul's Cong. Church* (Part-time Associate Pastor)
Hudson, IA	Community Church of Hudson *
Sulphur Springs, IN	Sulphur Springs Christian* (Family Life Minister)
Douglas, MA	Second Congregational Church*
Dunstable, MA	Dunstable Evangelical Congregational Church*
Tauton, MA	Union Congregational Church*
Pittston, ME	First Congregational Church of Pittston*
Avon, MN	Avon Community Church* (Part-time Worship Arts Dir.)
Cook, MN	Ashawa Chapel* (Part-time)
Beulah, ND	Beulah Congregational Church*
Scottsbluff, NE	Plymouth Cong. Church*
Jaffrey, NH	Hope Fellowship Church (Independent)
Lakeview, NY	Lakeview Community Church*
Speculator, NY	North Country Bible Fellowship*
Parkman, OH	Parkman Congregational Church*
Lima, OH	First Evangelical & Reformed Church*

* = Conference member
+ = In process

ACCUSATIONS *cont from pg 3*

has not had similar feelings when unfairly blamed and condemned?

Oh, that our response would be that of the psalmist... that we would not lash out in self-defense and retribution, but would turn to God in prayer. Oh, that we would express those feelings and even that anger to God in prayer, but then steadfastly rest in God's sovereign wisdom and justice. How often does our reaction to the wrongs of others serve only to inflame the situation and escalate the conflict?

After all, how did our Savior respond when falsely accused, with even His life on the line? As Isaiah so poetically said it,

*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 NKJV)

One of our Seven Guiding Values in the CCCC is to build a culture of believing prayer and intercession. How powerful our witness to the community would be and how close our fellowship if we were to overlook the offenses of our brothers and sisters against us, refuse to respond in kind and give ourselves instead to prayer, trusting our lives and our reputation to the sovereign God who loves us and who has promised to work all things for the good of those who love Him. ♦

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.

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.

CULTURE *cont from pg 2*

So how do we change this? It's actually not difficult, but it does take time and a lot of leadership commitment. Here are six mandatory things that must be practiced for intercession to become a cultural norm in our churches:

It must be publicly taught and demonstrated by the pastor(s)

— A congregation will not rise above their pastor in any area of service or spirituality. If the pastor does not see cross-cultural missions as a priority, the church will struggle to be a missions-hearted church. If the pastor does not regularly interact with pre-Christian people, the church will struggle to be evangelistically oriented. It's the same with intercessory prayer. If the pastor does not make this one of his personal priorities, neither will the congregation. The pastor must put his own "prayer culture" on display (leading by example) by teaching and preaching regularly on prayer and intercession. In addition, he must demonstrate his own prayer priority, witnessing to the congregation about his own prayer life and consistently giving reports and evidence of answered prayers. If the pastor cannot give a list of answered prayers, chances are good he's not consistent in intercessory prayer.

It must be led by the whole leadership team — The pastor alone cannot change and maintain a church's culture. The fruit of a congregation depends significantly on leadership. If the church's leadership team is merely a "board of directors" administering the church organization, prayer and intercession will often be missing. But when the leadership team partners with a pastor who is already practicing these things and then leads the church and her ministry into the heart of Jesus' harvest through prayer, everything changes. Church leaders should be front and center on Sundays and at all times, ready to pray with and for people, expecting God to move. Elder-level leaders who refuse to do this disqualify themselves from church leadership. It's that critical.

It must begin with the children — One of the reasons we are witnessing a growing prayerlessness in the American Church today is because we stopped teaching our children how to intercede generations ago. Somewhere along the way we transitioned from teaching our kids how to have a conversation with the Almighty and substituted what I call "nursery rhyme prayers" instead. Please do not take offense but humor me for a moment. If we teach our kids "Now I lay me down to sleep..." or "God is great, God is good..." we are not teaching them to pray but to recite. Proverbs 22:6 is important here. Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he

will not depart from it. When these kids become adults, they will rely on memorized prayers rather than their own, they will not know how to pray in public, and they will not have seen many answers to their prayers — leaving them uncertain if God hears them or if their way of praying works. We need to change the next generation's prayer experience by training them for intercession now.

It must be a consistent part of planning — Before any plans are made, the leadership (and often the whole congregation) should pray and intercede until they have confidence they have heard from God. God, by His Holy Spirit, determines the direction of a church, not a congregational vote. Little prayers at the beginning and end of meetings will not cut it. Don't ask God to bless your plans — rather, take the time to seek out HIS plans and do them. A church's activities, calendar, budget — literally everything — should be laid out in prayer.

It must be reason for public celebration — When this kind of prayer and intercession becomes normative, there will be ample answers to be celebrated! Celebrate them! When appropriate, declare them in worship, in small groups...everywhere! People inside and outside the church will begin to see once again that our God is awesome, still answers prayer, and works the miraculous. We dare not keep this news to ourselves!

It must be trained — People do not naturally know how to talk with God or to engage Him in intercession. They must be taught what the Scripture says. They must be trained (by example) how to enter into mountain-moving prayer and intercession. And they must be given the tools and resources they need to grow in this area of life and ministry. There are actually some very simple ways to begin this process if the people are willing to rediscover and practice the power of God through prayer!

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. What other "musts" would you include?

Would you like more information? Why not contact the Conference office at (651) 739-1474 and ask about our Church Development ministry? We'd love to talk with you. ♦

HEALTH NEWS



Heart Health

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

All adults know the significance of the heart to our health — if the heart stops, we die. We know it pumps blood throughout the body to take oxygen to the cells and remove waste products from them. Therefore, people become very anxious when they or their family member have problems with their heart. Maybe the following will help you to understand more about our hearts, and what we are praying for when others have heart difficulties.

Two terms — **heart attack** and **cardiac arrest** — are often associated with heart problems. They are two different problems.

Heart attack occurs when the blood flow to the heart is blocked. When an artery to an area of the heart is blocked for any length of time and the heart is not receiving oxygen-rich blood, the cells in the affected area begin to die. It becomes important to determine what area of the heart is being deprived of oxygen and open the affected artery quickly.

The most common indication of a heart attack is severe discomfort in the chest or other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, cold sweats and/or nausea/vomiting. Some of these symptoms may be mildly present days or weeks before severe symptoms occur. Damage to the heart may be occurring with the milder symptoms, since the heart does not stop beating during a heart attack.

Cardiac arrest occurs when an electrical malfunction in the heart causes irregular heartbeats. Since the pumping action is disrupted, the oxygen-rich blood is unable to reach the brain, lungs and other organs needed to sustain life. When a cardiac arrest occurs, immediate medical action is needed to reverse the irregular heart beating.

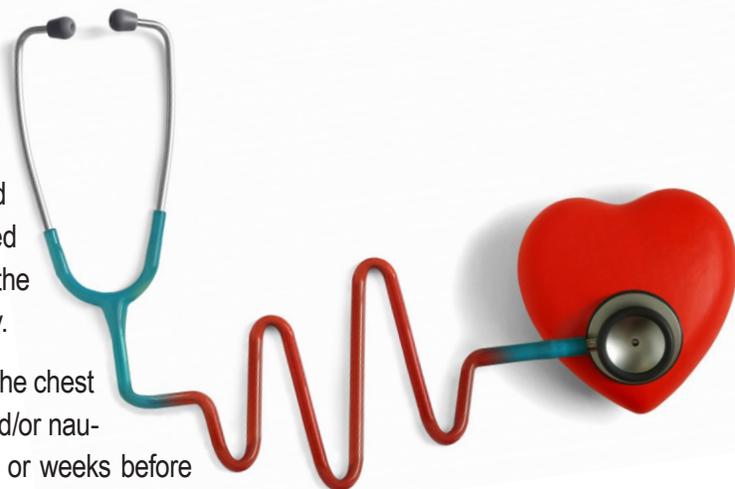
911 is the first number to call if you suspect you or someone you know may be having a heart attack or cardiac arrest. The sooner medical attention arrives and the person arrives at the hospital, the quicker proper medical treatment is started. Driving yourself or someone else to the hospital who has chest pain often delays treatment for up to an hour, if 911 is not called.

If an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is available, use it after 911 is called. The AED will provide a shock to the heart if it is not beating properly.

Women experiencing a heart attack may not have the same symptoms as men. They may have shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain. Since most women do not believe heart disease will affect them, are you taking good care of the women in your life to be sure they are heart healthy?

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Proverbs 4:23) ♦

Source: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/General/Cardiac-Arrest-vs-Heart-Attack-Infographic_UCM_450727_Article.jsp





Watch for the information brochure & registration form in your mail in March!

“Fully Invested”

Love the LORD your God...with all your heart, and soul, and strength...

Deuteronomy 4:6-9

SPEAKERS:

Neil Hudson, Gordon Hugenberg, Carol Kaminski and Ryan Howell

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