

Fellowship FOCUS



2011 Annual Convention



Theme:
**Living the Vision:
Equipping and Inspiring
One Another**

Date: July 14-17, 2011

**Location: Cornerstone Bible Church,
Mountain Lake, Minn.**

Speaker:
Dr. Elwood Chipchase, Encouragement Ministries



Elwood and Joy Chipchase have served together in the ministry for many years. Dr. Chipchase was a pastor over the course of 38 years in both rural and urban settings. They have ministered together serving God's people in churches, conferences, banquets, retreats, Bible conferences, missions conferences and seminars.

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Comment



By Sharon Berg, Editor

When you looked at the cover of this issue, were you surprised to see mention of this summer's FEBC annual convention? Even though it's chilly in Nebraska as I write this, it's time to think about July's event, hosted at Cornerstone Bible Church in Mountain Lake, Minn. "Just the facts" are included on the cover; you'll find more details in the May/June *Fellowship Focus*. *One detail to note:* No youth convention is planned this year, but there *will* be a children's convention.

A couple of readers took the time to share their thoughts about recent articles in the Focus (page 3). We always welcome feedback, so please share your compliments or complaints with us at fellowshipfocus@febministries.org.

Blessings,

Sharon Berg

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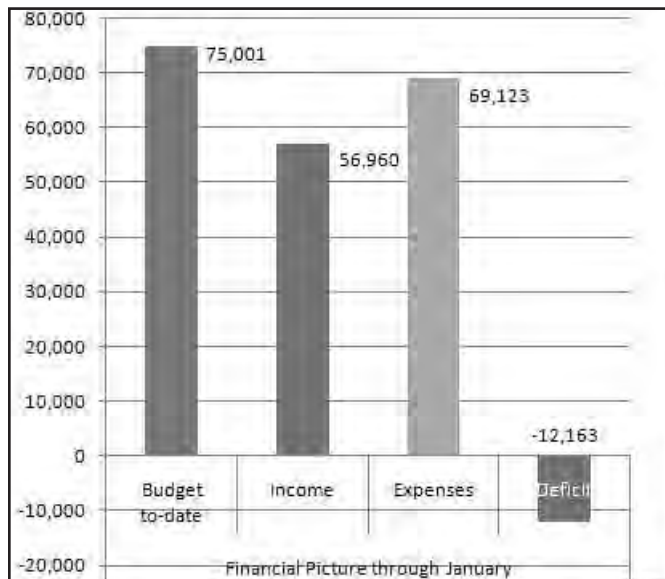
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FEBC Ministries Income Thru Jan. 2011



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 click on the *Fellowship Focus* tab



Talking the Walk

The Great Commission commands us not just to live out the Gospel, but to proclaim it.

When Frank received the phone call, it was not unexpected, but painful nonetheless. His lifelong friend, Charlie, had died of cancer. Frank came to know Jesus as a young adult. He wanted Charlie to come to know Jesus as well. Frank prayed for Charlie regularly. He went out of his way to do nice things for him. Frank did everything he could to be like Jesus in their friendship.

However, Frank was afraid to actually talk about Jesus with Charlie. His fears included feeling like he might not be able to explain the Gospel very well. He thought that he might damage the friendship. He feared that Charlie might think that he was a religious fanatic. There were other vague, nameless apprehensions as well. He could talk about church sometimes, and he invited Charlie to church, but Charlie never came. Frank also asked his pastor to talk about Jesus with Charlie. Eventually the pastor did, but Charlie did not become a believer. On the day of the phone call, the last opportunity expired, and Frank just felt nauseous.

Most evangelicals understand that we have a responsibility to share the Gospel with non-believers. We have been reactionary against impersonal, "canned" Gospel presentations. We have embraced concepts like lifestyle evangelism and friendship evangelism. We have tried to show Jesus to others through the way that

we live our lives. Many have embraced the concept perhaps inaccurately attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the Gospel always, and when necessary use words." I do not speak in objection to these ideas. My concern is that we have used these concepts to neglect a clear command of Scripture.

The purpose of believers on earth is to glorify God by obedience. God's command to us is the Great Commission. We can read one version of it in Mark 16:15, where Jesus commanded all of us, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (ESV). Although Frank is commendable in terms of his prayer and his lifestyle evangelism, he failed to obey the command to proclaim the Gospel.

Contributing to this failure are societal pressures. Pluralism has made talking about the exclusivity of the Gospel anathema. Christians perceive that our culture does not want to hear about Jesus as *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. In our society, we fear offending others by talking openly about our personal experience with Jesus.

As evangelical believers, we absolutely must live out our faith with integrity. Our *talk* about Jesus will be dramatically impeded without a lifestyle that displays Jesus. We have to *walk the talk*. However powerful a weapon our

Christian walk may be, it is a somewhat dull weapon. Without the *talk* about Jesus, non-believers will have great difficulty in knowing why we are different from other people. They will not be able to know how they can experience the same peace, joy, confidence and hope that we enjoy as believers.

The Great Commission commands us not just to live out the Gospel, but to proclaim it. It is not a command to ask the pastor to tell our friends about Jesus, but for us to tell them about Jesus personally. It is not to invite them to church, but to *talk the walk*.

The 20/20 vision statement of the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches reads, "We are a fellowship of churches that equips and inspires one another so that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed by every member of every church at every opportunity." In our society and even in our Christian culture this seems an impossible dream, but it is required to be in full obedience to the Great Commission. All believers are commanded to talk the walk.

We need a cultural change in our Christian experience. It is more than just knowing that we should tell others about Jesus. We know that, and most of us do not do it as a matter of lifestyle. How can we change? At the FEBC, that is what we are actively exploring. ■

From our readers



FEBC President Blaine Donaldson's message "I have a vision ..." (*January/February 2011*) is right on to our biblical purpose of the church. What a powerful church that has that vision. Thanks for your good leadership.

Frank C. Wiens

A special thanks for the last issue of *Fellowship Focus*. I found the articles stimulating and challenging, getting down to the basics. We appreciate your good work.

Agnes Tharp (*Global Outreach Mission/France*)



The Pivotal Role of Truth in our Lives

By Harvey Schultz

Recently my mind has been impressed with a word we find repeatedly in Scripture. That word is **truth**. Numerous passages highlight its importance in our lives.

- We must come to the knowledge of the **truth** to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4).
- Knowledge of the **truth** leads us to maturity and stability (Ephesians 4:13-15).
- Jesus said that knowing the **truth** will set us free (John 8:32).
- The church is to protect the **truth** and present it to the world (1 Timothy 3:15).
- Preachers are to make sure that they handle **truth** correctly in preaching (2 Timothy 2:15).
- Disregarding the **truth** will cause us to backslide and destroy our faith (2 Timothy 2:18).
- Suppressing (or disregarding) the **truth** leads us into sin and wickedness (Romans 1:18).

Contemporary culture and current philosophies increasingly insist that there is no absolute truth. It is all relative, we are told. You have your truth, I have mine. What might be true for you might not be true for me.

Consider all that Satan can accomplish if he can get us to doubt the truth about God’s person, His character, His Word, His promises and His warnings.

If that were so, the word truth itself would be devoid of all meaning and substance.

Just the few passages quoted above make it quite clear that according to the Bible, there is absolute, unchanging truth which has the power to bring us salvation, transform our lives and build stability into them.

It is therefore not surprising that

Satan’s primary focus is to get us to doubt truth. That’s where he started in the Garden of Eden when he said: “Did God really say ... ?” (Genesis 3:1). Paul clearly states that Eve was led astray when she was deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:14); deceived into thinking that God’s Word was not true. We are told that Satan seeks to deceive the whole world (Revelations 12:9). Is it any wonder that Jesus called Satan a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44)?

Look at that list above. It is not complete. Consider all that Satan can accomplish if he can get us to doubt the truth: doubt the truth about God’s person, His character, His Word, His promises, His warnings.

Satan is a master at deception. Jesus said so. He also warned us that Satan is capable of manufacturing false signs and wonders (miracles!) (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11; Revelations 13:13). With that ability he is able to suggest thoughts and produce supporting “evidence,” which together are very convincing to support his lying suggestions to get you and me to disregard truth and embrace falsehood. If he can’t do it directly, he will use our friends or current cultural trends and philosophies.

So he whispers half truths and lies into our conscious and subconscious mind and manufactures evidence which seems to support his case and

demonstrate that God is not truthful, at least not in this instance. He gives his own twisted meaning to what is happening in our lives:

- “God doesn’t love you” (you are sick and dying).
- “God doesn’t have your good at heart” (you are in financial difficulty).
- “God isn’t present in your life” (you feel so lonely).

- “God isn’t listening to you” (your prayer isn’t answered).
- “God’s warnings aren’t true” (you’re living in sin and haven’t experienced any negative consequences).
- “God’s power isn’t enough to overcome demonic forces” (they keep harassing you).
- “You can’t access God’s power for victory (you are defeated).
- “God’s promises may hold for someone else but not for you.”

No wonder that when Paul talks about our spiritual struggle he starts his description of our defensive armor by telling us to have the “belt of **truth** buckled around your waist” (Ephesians 6:14). Among other things, and above all else, we must practice reasoning from truth. We should evaluate current trends by truth.

- We should subject our interpretation of what we have experienced to truth.
- We should interpret our subjective feelings in the light of truth and *not* allow them to determine whether something is right or wrong.
- We should determine whether or not a course of action is right by truth.
- We should evaluate our own actions by truth.
- We should consider the practices of our friends according to truth.

There is only *one defense* against error and deception: it is the belt of **truth**. Learn the truth. Know the truth. Believe it. Remember it. Rely on it. Filter all thoughts and experiences through the truth. Reject anything and everything which doesn’t line up with the truth of God’s Word.

Truth is always truth no matter what I think or feel or experience. ■

Unless otherwise indicated, Scriptures are from the New International Version.

Omaha's EBC throws a party to mark 50 years

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. Psalm 100:5 (NIV)

Fiftieth anniversaries are a special time of celebrating and remembering. That was certainly true at the recent anniversary celebration at Evangelical Bible Church in Omaha, when 300 people gathered to praise God for 50 years of His faithfulness to the church. Five of its founding members who still attend EBC — **Anne Janz, Bob and Lil Frey** and **Don and Arlene Krehbiel** — were on hand to share in the celebration. Testimonies and photos told the story of the founding and progress of the church, and music and praise filled the time of worship.

Grace Bible Institute (now Grace University) played an important part in EBC's founding in 1960. The school had attracted students and faculty from many of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (now FEBC) member churches in North America, and the EMB leadership had set up their international office across the street from the school. Sensing an opportunity to plant a church in Omaha, they contacted some of their members who had a connection to Grace to see if there was interest. Soon the group began to meet for Bible study and prayer. Their eventual search for a meeting place resulted in finding a church building in the Florence area just north of Omaha. Regular services began with 12 families and a total of 26 members. Their first pastor was the **Rev. John Eveland** of **Christian Fellowship Chapel** of Winnipeg, Man.

In 1969, the church relocated and changed its name to Evangelical Bible Church. EBC's membership has grown to 257, with an average of 367 people attending Sunday morning services. Its diversity of ministries has also increased, but one thing has remained the same: EBC's unchanging stand on the Scriptures, and its desire to continue to minister the Gospel of grace to greater metro Omaha.

Sherrie Lindsey, Debbie Friesen and Bob Frey contributed to this story.



FELLOWSHIP VIEWS • FELLOWSHIP VIEWS • FELLOWSHIP VIEWS

Vision Seminar

More than 36 people from 17 churches attended a seminar on leading churches through change, by **Dr. Ron Klassen**, Executive Director of Rural Home Missionary Association (RHMA). The seminar, titled "Retooling for the Present and Future," was held at Faith Evangelical Bible Church (Henderson, Neb.) on Feb. 17.

Homegoing

Two former Fellowship missionaries passed away recently:

- **Art Schmidt** served under GMU/Avant Ministries in Ecuador for 35 years and in North Mexico for seven years. Art developed a Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program to train pastors and leaders while they continued to minister in their own communities. Part of his legacy is that two of his sons, Fred and Jon, serve as missionaries of our Fellowship. He died Jan. 4 in Enid, Okla.
- **Melvin Claassen** served under the Congo Inland Mission (of which our Fellowship was a founding partner) from 1957 until his family was evacuated in the rebellion of 1960. He returned to Congo with his family in 1966 and worked until 1975. After serving in various ministries and pastorates outside of our Fellowship, he was asked to be the associate pastor at Cornerstone Bible Church in 2007, and he served there until his death.

Scholarships

It's time to apply for scholarships. If you are a student attending a Bible college and preparing for ministry, you may apply for a Christian Ministry Scholarship of \$1,000. Pastors and missionaries of the Fellowship can apply for a Continuing Education Scholarship to pursue a graduate degree or special training related to their ministry. To apply, request an application package from orders@febministries.org.

Missions Grants

Small grants are available to college students taking on a cross-cultural mission assignment for at least six weeks. For requirements and application forms, contact orders@febministries.org.

Shepherd Search

Pray that God would provide shepherds for:

- Kenora, Ont. — **Kenora Bible Church** (youth pastor)
- Langham, Sask. — **Langham Evangelical Bible Church** (associate pastor of youth and worship)
- Wymark, Sask. — **Christian Fellowship Church of Rhineland** (associate pastor)

For more information go to:

www.febministries.org/opportunities/pastoral_openings.

To request an FEBC Application for Ministry, e-mail info@febministries.org

Once a year it's "Ladies' Day" at the Fellowship's Manitoba and Ontario churches

By Hilda Froese and Gwen Froese

In our Fellowship we have 42 churches. When looking at a map pin-pointing their locations, we see many of these churches in clusters. This is true of the Manitoba/Ontario area where we have a total of 11 churches.

Several of the original churches felt the need to combine their efforts for outreach and fellowship, thus forming a Manitoba/Ontario Extension Committee (MOEC) which is presently known as Lakeland. Ladies' Day began in the hearts and minds of the wives of MOEC and representatives of the "ladies' society executives" from many of these churches. A planning meeting was held June 19, 1973, in Steinbach, Man., and the first meeting took place on Oct. 26, 1973, hosted by the Steinbach ladies at Cornerstone Bible Church. The day's agenda was simple, beginning at 10:30 a.m. with coffee and rolls, followed by congregational singing, several testimonies, music, a guest speaker, an offering project and a prayer time with a list of specific requests. Everyone was asked to bring a sack lunch. Eighty ladies attended. It was so well received that it became an annual event.

By 1975 the host church provided a bowl of hot borscht to go with the sack lunch. The first recorded offering of \$69.41 was taken in 1976, with \$25 given to the speaker and \$44.41 to Fisher Bay Bible Camp, which is owned by the MOEC and primarily ministers to the First Nations people in the area.

In 1979 the ladies at Kenora Bible Church in Ontario hosted the event and served a hot noon meal of hamburgers, potato and vegetable casserole, dinner rolls and dainties. What a treat! The Steinbach ladies even chartered a school bus for the day.

An interesting dilemma occurred in 1984, when Hodgson Bible Church in Manitoba hosted the event. The morn-

By meeting together on an annual basis, fellowship and friendships have developed with sisters in Christ within our Fellowship Churches.

ing offering was \$159.50, but the speaker had set a fee of \$140. The ladies decided to take another offering in the afternoon and collected \$179.31. Problem solved! They gave the difference to Fisher Bay Bible Camp.

In 2000 things were simplified when the ladies from each host church planned the entire day, instead of trying to gather the women from each church for a summer planning meeting. A secretary was no longer needed to keep notes; instead, the host church kept its own notes and plans and gave these records to the next host church.

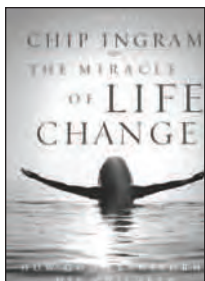
Two years ago Hodgson Bible Church was again our host. The church is located in the Interlake region in northern Manitoba. Their theme, "The Anchor Holds," featured their natural

geography with props, videography, music, seafood, etc. The guest speaker, Sherry Heidebrecht, as well as a lady from the church, shared candidly how the Lord had been the anchor in her life. The wonderful offering of \$1,275 was again designated for the camp to be used for much-needed kitchen items. With the exception of a few years, Fisher Bay Bible Camp has been the beneficiary of most offerings given.

In all of the 37 years of this special Ladies' Day event, God has blessed the churches who hosted and those who attended. Each year we have heard many great speakers, musicians, skits and testimonies of God's blessings and provisions in the good and difficult times. Of equal importance is the fellowship and friendships that have developed with sisters in Christ within our Fellowship Churches. Our prayer is that God will bond us together in Him, with others, for the glory and praise of His Name.

We have found these times of fellowship truly inspiring and encouraging. Perhaps this article will plant an idea in *your* mind for an event which would bring the ladies of your "cluster" or area together to develop unity and friendships as sisters in the Lord. ■

Hilda and Gwen have been sisters-in-law since 1976. Both are busy farmers' wives, and both have enjoyed serving on the Commission on Women's Ministries and other FEBC commissions through the years.



The Miracle of Life Change

Prepare to experience transformation! Just as a butterfly emerges from its chrysalis, Chip Ingram helps you break free of destructive patterns to become the person you long to be. Unpacking Ephesians 4, this 10-session study will show you how to overcome barriers to change, deal with sin, rely on God to bring out your best, and more. Includes four DVDs and study guide. (Sessions approx. 25 min. each.)



EYES ON THE WORLD

By Fayth Boeker, Commission on Missions

Since the apostles and early disciples preached in Europe at the beginning of Christianity; and since the Gospel has been preached there for more than 2,000 years, one may wonder why missionaries are needed in Europe. Our Fellowship has had missionaries there for more than half a century for many of the reasons observed by others:

“What was once the hub of the global Christian movement has now become one of the world’s most challenging mission fields.”

Shane Bertou, shanebertou.wordpress.com/2006/01/10/

“While Europe has a dynamic and rich Christian heritage, most of its inhabitants today barely seem to give it a thought. Most Europeans seem to have forgotten or rejected their Christian heritage.”

www.frontline.org.za/mission-reports-prayer/mission-europe.htm

“Less than one in ten attend any type of church, and percentages of people in evangelical churches are minimal.”

www.theevangelist.org.uk/articles/europe-a-huge-mission-field

■ **Leslie and Margaret Clevenger**, with Avant Ministries, have served in Italy since 1996, living in Modena, Italy, for the past eight years. For six years they shared the Gospel through a bookstore ministry. Les and Margaret have now moved on to church planting, initiated by a Bible study they led for the past two years. Their goal is to keep the people of the church involved in every step of church growth, so that when they leave, the Italians will be able to carry on.

■ **Alicia Kliewer** has been in transition for nearly a year. Though still affiliated with Avant, she is on loan to World Team. At the end of January 2011, after waiting more than nine months for a visa, Alicia was thrilled to join a church planting team in Milan, Italy. Alicia previously lived in Italy. As a result, she completed an Italian language refresher course in just three weeks.

■ **Greg and Agnes Tharp** have served under Global Outreach Mission for more than 38 years in France. Greg’s main activity is publishing Christian books for teenagers. This includes choosing manuscripts, extensive editing, managing proof-reading, deciding page layout, designing covers, monitoring printing processes and distributing the finished books. Agnes is actively involved in music at church, in prayer groups and with follow-up of new believers.

■ **Sam and Debbie Dick** have served under Avant Ministries since 1996. For the past six years they have lived in Spain. They help 130-plus missionary co-workers in Europe with logistic details, as well as assisting the regional director in the Europe Regional Office with various projects and events. Their work in taking care of details frees others to focus their time and energy on church-planting efforts.

■ For 17 years **Kenton and Sonja Becker**, now with Tentmakers Bible Mission, have planted churches in France. From the beginning they worked together as a family. Recently the two older children received resident cards, enabling them to stay in France and continue to minister as a family. They live in Bordeaux, France, seeking to start a church. One of the Beck-

ers’ strategies to build evangelistic relationships is involvement in the local music schools and basketball clubs. Kenton is an accredited basketball coach in the French Federation of Basketball. They all sing or play instruments in two music schools and in the conservatory of Bordeaux. Slowly, God is building up His church there.

■ Another FEBC family serving in France (Avant Ministries) is **Sheldon and Laurie Rempel** with their four children. They have been in mission work for 16 years, but for the past three-and-a-half years they have been involved in a church planting effort in Paris, France (one of three most influential cities of the world). Their ministry is characterized by the phrase, “sharing Jesus through our day-to-day lives at school, in the coffee shop, with neighbors and in the home.” Recently they began a Kid’s Club where Jesus is shared with 25-35 children ages 4-11. They share Christ through theatre, music, games and crafts.

KEEP PRAYING

Les/Margaret Clevenger (Saron Mennonite, Fairview, Okla.): Pray for the church body to grow together with a real sense of commitment so they will be ready to carry on when home leave begins in July. Also pray for son David, now finishing his senior year of home schooling and looking toward college. Les asks for wisdom as he helps in the bookstore once again during the month of March.

Pray for **Alicia Kliewer** (Evangelical Bible, Omaha, Neb.) as she adjusts to a new home, a new church planting team and new responsibilities. She praises the Lord for a ministry in Milan, Italy.

Greg/Agnes Tharp (Cornerstone Bible, Mountain Lake, Minn.): Pray for resources in the printing of two novels and a school planner (one of the only ways to legally get the Gospel into schools). They are burdened for a neighbor lady who needs to meet Jesus.

Sam/Debbie Dick (Jansen Bible, Jansen, Neb.): In April the European church planting leaders will meet in Málaga, Spain. Pray for the Dicks’ involvement in planning and serving. Also ask our Father to guide them as they make plans for home assignment this April through July.

Pray for **Kent/Sonja Becker** (Marion, S.D.) as they concentrate on two special projects in the coming months. One involves setting to music several Scripture songs that Sonja has written. The other is a special retreat for families in June. Hopefully, they will be at the FEBC Convention in July.

Sheldon/Laurie Rempel (Dalmeny, Sask.): Pray for the Kid’s Club, March 16, 23, 30, April 6 and 27. Also pray for them as they return to Abbotsford, B.C., in June. When they return to France in the fall, they will leave their oldest daughter in college and their grade 11 son to attend school with a cousin in Abbotsford, B.C. This will be a big change for the family, and they need God’s grace for this transition. ■

Tabita Ministries shares the Gospel as it seeks to alleviate poverty in Romania

By Milton and Kathi Torio, Tabita Ministries



Romania is a country of contrasts: overcrowded cities and a serene countryside with shepherds and sheep; traffic jams, and horse-drawn wagons and oxen teams; modern super malls full of the latest European fashions, and gypsy peddlers on the sidewalks. Thousands of villages, behind the times, are maintaining the traditional lifestyle. Medieval buildings, most in need of repair, preserve Romanian history. Proclaiming the modern way are towering skyscrapers. Romania is an impoverished country struggling to modernize, suffering from the wounds of Communist dictator Nicolai Ceausescu.

Icons of the pagan state religion dominate the countryside with pomp and grandeur, proudly declaring they symbolize the correct belief (“Dreapta credinta”). The Christian church remains strong and true under the cross of Christ (Romania currently has the fastest growth of Protestant churches in Europe). This former Eastern bloc country, now part of the European Union, is rushing towards economic prosperity, leaving the elderly, single mothers and children, and the disabled behind. Aside from lim-

ited family allowance, there is little or no assistance for these people groups. Approximately 22 percent of Romanians live in abject poverty.

Birth of a ministry

Tabita Ministries (*tah-BEE-tah* is the Romanian pronunciation of Tabitha) was inspired by Acts 9:36-43, the story of Dorcas, also called Tabitha, a woman from Joppa who was known for befriending and helping the poor. The heart of Tabita Ministries is to share the Word of God, help alleviate poverty, and bring practical help and hope to those in need in Romania. Tabita Ministries is a transdenominational ministry founded by Milton and Kathi Torio, Grace Church FEBC missionaries and Pastor Marius and Tabita Ianc of Romania. Tabita Ministries is administered by Capstone Mission Society, a ministry agent of International Christian Mission Services.

Tabita Ministries is located in the 600-year-old town of Ciacova (Chock-oh-vah) in western Romania. About 7,300 people live there, with 20,000 in the surrounding area. Tabita Ministries reaches helpless widows, abandoned mothers

and children, the elderly and the infirm, with the hope and love of Jesus. This is accomplished through the Agape Sunday-Evangelistic Outreaches, the Emergency Food & Clothing Program, Casa Agape-Emergency Housing, Life Skills Coaching, Bible Club and Musical Program, and Spiritual Mentoring. Future plans include teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and micro-business ventures.

Learning For Life Center

The Learning for Life Center, a two-



story building, is nearing completion. The lower level consists of a kitchen and fellowship room; the upper level will be an apartment for the future program facilitator. Funding for this project, in part, was provided by a \$5,000 FEBC match-

ing grant, as well as many other generous supporters.



The Learning for Life Center is not just a building. It's like a huge billboard proclaiming the love of Jesus. Communist dictatorship does not promote the concept of sharing or helping your neighbors, and discredits the existence of a loving God. *The Government is God!* Although Romania has been free from communism for 20 years, the damage is far reaching. Communist ideology doesn't disappear overnight, and the controlling tentacles of the Romanian Orthodox religion reach deeply into communities. The Christian Church (often referred to as the "Repentance Church") is not considered trustworthy. Many prejudices must be overcome, and with God's help Tabita Ministries is working to change these notions.

This facility is already being used to bring many to His saving grace. Recently, a youth outreach was held at the Learning for Life Center with very positive results. Young people from other villages were invited, enjoying a great time of fellowship, music and teaching from the Word of God by Pastor Marius. They were very surprised to discover how much fun they could have in a church setting. Christian community is being established. Tabita Ministries is a curiosity in Ciacova and people want to find out what this "Repentance Church" is all about.

One of the youth recently celebrated his 18th birthday, a cause for great celebration in Romania. He invited his Orthodox friends from school. This party took place at the Learning for Life Center, and these youth, who have never attended a Christian event, had such a good time that now each one of them would like to have their 18th birthday party there. Pastor Marius gave a salvation message, and they are all very interested in hearing more about Jesus.

(The youth receive religious teaching in school about the Orthodox Church, but know nothing about the truth found in Jesus.)

The Enterprise Center

Micro business is an excellent way to promote economic growth in rural communities, creating vital sources of employment. The rapid change from communism to a free market system has been daunting for many Romanians. There are small business opportunities, but many lack the skills and finances required to start up a business. As with any start-up, these businesses are more likely to survive if the owners have basic business skills. A course focusing on technical skills, marketing skills, managing finances and confidence-building would give many the opportunities to provide a more substantial income and overcome the cycle of poverty.

Through the Enterprise Center Tabita Ministries will establish a non-profit social enterprise project. Located on a property close to the Ciacova town center, this project will consist of a two-story building facilitating the preparation and sale of locally-grown products such as honey and dairy, along with staple grocery items. A cafeteria offering coffee and pastries will operate as well, bringing people of the community together to exchange ideas and create new friendships. Tabita Ministries will provide on-the-job training in sales and marketing, building confidence and skill. Return from the wholesale and retail sales will be used to expand Tabita Ministries' programs.

Making a difference

Tabita Ministries is making a difference in the lives of many of these disadvantaged people, not only providing food, clothing and help for the homeless, but, more importantly, developing loving and caring relationships and sharing the hope found in Jesus. People currently benefitting can

hardly believe the blessing they are receiving from the people in Canada and the United States. They are so grateful, and it would not be happening if it were not for supporters' willingness to give beyond their church community.

Prayer needed

Feeding programs save people from starvation; clothing projects help them stay warm; housing projects make them



more comfortable; medical aid facilitates healing and overcomes disease – but *only* the Good News of Jesus Christ can save a lost soul from a life of eternal suffering and separation from God. Satan, (not hunger, disease or poverty), is the enemy of mankind. Christians are part of God's army, and prayer is one of our vital weapons.

You can read more about this work in Romania at www.tabitaministries.com



FOCUS ON OUR CHURCHES

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

Omaha, Neb.

Charles Tschetter, Pastor

CBC recently created a way to encourage other believers to share the Gospel. Through share@cbcomaha.org, people in the congregation can send a short e-mail or more detailed message telling how God is using them to share their faith with others. Pastor Rick Bragg shares these stories with the congregation via email.

The Friendship Banquet in January was a major outreach event that resulted in 12 people trusting Christ for their salvation. **Dr. Larry Moyer** of Evantell spoke to 140 people, including 61 guests who were invited to hear him answer the question, "If God had five minutes to speak to you, what He would tell you?" An additional seven people trusted Christ when Dr. Moyer spoke at two Sunday worship services.

A new mid-week parenting class addresses "Effective Parenting in a Defective World."

The theme for the annual Men's Retreat was "Perfecting Our Vision." Speakers were Nebraska football coach **Ron Brown**, who spoke on "Declaring Truth in the Public Square"; **Dr. Jim Eckman** of Grace University, "The Christian and the Moral Collapse of Our Nation"; and **Dennis Wiens** of SAT-7, "The Christian and Our World." (All can be heard on the CBC website, cbcomaha.org, under sermons.)

Sharon Berg, Correspondent

COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Tahlequah, Okla.

Chris Wiley, Pastor

Recently, we decided to focus on evangelizing in our own community. Pastor Chris is taking us through a program called "The Way of The Master," evangelizing the way Jesus did. The program is hosted by Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, and emphasizes speaking to the hearts of others rather than to their intellect. We realize that evangelizing is done in many ways; however, in this program evangelism is made basic. We are learning to interact with those whom we don't know, and put our fears of doing so to rest.

Three of our young missionary families have moved themselves and their families to the areas where they will serve. **Kevin Bult** (CAM) and his family are settling in the Puebla area of Mexico; **Ryan Powell** (TEAM), and his family relocated

to France; and **Hannah Curby** (Avant Ministries) is now in Italy. Each family reports excitement in sharing the Lord with others and learning the ways of those with whom they share. Needless to say, we continue to marvel at what these families go through, and delight in their accomplishments.

Milestone: We had our very first wedding vow renewal ceremony in January. Our head elder, **Charles Anderson**, and his lovely wife, Mary, renewed their vows in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Bryn Smith, Correspondent

CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH

Mountain Lake, Minn.

Nathan Janzen, Pastor

At a Women's Ministry event, **Cheri Hanson** shared about her adoption experience from Russia.

Many missionaries were home for the holidays: **Angela Penner**, who serves with New Life Ranch in Colcord, Okla.; **Vangie Claassen**, who arrived from Indonesia, where she teaches missionary children with Mission Aviation Fellowship; **Darwin and Karen Stoesz** with SEND were stateside from Japan;

COUNTRYSIDE BIBLE CHURCH

Meade, Kan.

David Cummings, Pastor

We welcomed our new associate pastor and his wife, **Chuck and Kathy Finster**, at an installation service Jan. 9. The Finsters and their children, Scott, Mark and Rebecca, moved from Hutchinson. The Finsters invited the church family for an open house Jan. 29. (See below.)

As an outreach to the community, we hosted a screening of the film, "No Greater Love" in January.

Kim Cummings joined several ladies from Wichita to travel to Tomsk, Siberia, for 11 days to lead a women's conference and to minister with orphans through the Antioch Initiative with Slavic Gospel Mission. **Ralph and Ann Classen** served on a short-term mission trip to Mexico Jan. 28-Feb. 18.

With a gift of memory verses, Pastor David and Kim have challenged us to learn a new Bible verse every two weeks in 2011. At the start of the new year, our women were offered the choice of Bible studies: "A Woman Who Reflects the Heart of Jesus," by Elizabeth George; "Respectable Sins" by Jerry Bridges; or to continue with the study in Hebrews.

Mary Friesen, Correspondent

Countryside's Congregation Welcomes Associate Pastor

Countryside Bible Church in Meade, Kan., welcomed its new Associate Pastor Charles (Chuck) L. Finster, his wife, Kathy, and their three children, Scott, Mark and Rebecca, at an installation service in January.

Chuck will focus on discipleship and biblical counseling. He has been in ministry for 11 years, serving at Daulphin Way Baptist Church and Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., before being called to Grace Bible Church in Hutchinson, Kan. Prior to entering the ministry, Chuck worked in the uniform sales industry. He earned a master's of divinity from The Master's Seminary and completed his undergraduate degree at Oregon State University. He grew up in Portland, Ore., later moving to Texas, where he married Kathy.

Chuck has known Senior Pastor David Cummings for 17 years. "It is a privilege to serve with him as we shepherd the flock of God in Meade," Chuck said. "God has blessed this church in so many ways, and I have been drawn here to serve and assist people in their growth into the likeness of Jesus Christ."



FOCUS ON OUR CHURCHES

and **Mel and Jodi Klassen** were here from Camp Id-Ra-Ha-Je in Bailey, Colo. **Kevin and Melisa Borrer** of Mission Aviation Fellowship were home for a six-month stay while in transition from Shell, Ecuador. They left Jan. 28 to serve in Lesotho in Southern Africa, where Kevin will be the new field director.

Arlene Stoesz, Correspondent

DALMENY BIBLE CHURCH

Dalmeny, Sask.

Dennis Friesen, Pastor

We raised funds for Spruce Manor Special Care Home by hosting a soup dinner after a January worship service.

Youth activities have included "Freezin' 11 Retreat" in January, together with the youth from **Salem Church** in Waldheim and **Martensville Mission Church**. The youth have also enjoyed Christmas and New Year's Eve parties, a "Senior High Lock-In," and "See You at the Flagpole."

Marilyn Harder, Correspondent

EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Omaha, Neb.

Dr. Don Pahl, Senior Pastor

In mid-March, an EBC mission team made up of adults and young people will travel to Ecuador with the organization "Extreme Response." They will be accompanied by missionaries **Roger and Lois Reimer**. While there, they will help build a foundation for a Christian school at Pifo, and will minister to needy persons and families who live near a dump in Quito.

To help commemorate our 50th Anniversary last fall, we published a new church cookbook. Proceeds from the cookbook sales are going toward the Fistula Project. Missionaries Steve and Mikki Schmidt, serving with SIM in the Niger Republic of West Africa, report that a tragic condition affects thousands of young women in Africa. Injured in long labor, often giving birth to stillborn infants, these young ladies become maimed for life and outcasts. Yet a simple surgical procedure can return them to normal living. Through the Fistula Project, EBC can help meet this need to build and maintain a fistula clinic (as these young women are not welcome in regular hospitals).

We were pleased to have the new **FEBC President Blaine Donaldson** speak



EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Langham, Sask.

Greg Guarnett, Senior Pastor

Our **100th Anniversary Celebration** will be in Langham on July 23-24, and everyone is invited! If you attended our church in the past, we'd love to see you again. Mark it on your calendar!

Continue to pray that we will find an associate pastor of youth and music. The Youth Room has been renovated, and we celebrated with an open house and prayers of dedication.

Our congregational care committee hosted a banquet to celebrate the lives of our seniors, which included a reminiscing time with praise and prayer.

Retired missionary **Dorothy Peters** reported on her trip "back home" to Japan last fall.

Marilyn Friesen, Correspondent



at our men's Iron Sharpener's monthly breakfast in January.

We will offer another session of Financial Peace University (FPU) this spring, as we have had such good feedback from those who have taken the classes.

Baptisms: Jared Saiz

New Members: Heather Ingraham, Carl and Marlene Kuhns, Larry and Sandy Tippery, Alex Schubert

Sherrie Lindsey, Correspondent

EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Dallas, Ore.

Jerry Franz, Senior Pastor

In January, EBC started offering Financial Peace University, a class by Dave Ramsey which teaches attendees how to dump debt and gain financial freedom.

A ladies night out event in January provided a fun evening filled with bunco, a game, and laughter. Each woman was asked to bring diapers or new or gently

used baby items to be donated to Bambino's, a nonprofit organization that provides women and children with basic food, clothing and various other supplies.

The high school youth group held its annual youth café fundraiser in December. The money people donated for a bowl of chili and various other items went to offset Spring Retreat costs. The youth headed to Hoodoo ski area for a day of skiing and snowboarding in January. The junior high youth enjoyed their winter retreat at Son Lodge in February. On Jan. 28, dozens of kids and their families gathered in the gym for the annual Awana Grand Prix.

Milestones: Harry and Adeline Fast celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18.

Ashley Brown, Correspondent

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FOCUS ON OUR CHURCHES

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EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Grunthal, Man.

Russ Reimer, Pastor

An important highlight in the life of our church was the installation service for **Pastor Russ and Sheila Reimer**. **Pastor Mark Funk** of **Stuartburn Gospel Chapel** gave the "charge," and our **FEBC President Blaine Donaldson** facilitated the installation.



Jarrod Chamberlin (representing the **Grunthal Ministerial**), our elders **Ryan Froese**, **Wes Froese**, **Dennis Hiebert** and **Blaine Donaldson**. **Russ and Sheila Reimer** are seated.

The new year began with a recommissioning service for **Ron and Eunice Wiebe**, who returned to Brazil on Jan. 5 to work at Child Evangelism Fellowship's National Institute in Sao Paulo for the next three months. Later in January, their daughter **Kendra** returned to teach at the Pan American Christian Academy there.

Women's Ministries hosted an evening of fun and games in late January, showering brides and new mothers. We also packed love boxes for two of our students. Women had the opportunity to exchange names and become "prayer sisters."

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Lustre, Mont.

John Skillman, Pastor

We held a special time of prayer for our FEBC churches during our Sunday school hour on Jan. 16.

January was a challenging month for our members due to record snowfall. Church was cancelled on two Sundays; meetings of women's ministries, the church board and others, as well as potlucks, were cancelled most of the

month because of drifting snow on the roads that made it impossible for many to travel to services or ministries. We have been praying for our ranchers, who have had to travel in the weather.

Sharon Skillman, Correspondent

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Marion, S.D.

Randy Maass, Pastor

Pastor Maass is preaching through the book of Matthew at church and teaching "Sermon Delivery" on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Sioux Falls Seminary this quarter.

We enjoyed a soup dinner after church on Jan. 9, after which the men took down the Christmas decorations while the women made "New Year's Cookies," which were then enjoyed by all!

About half of the church congregation participated in Christmas caroling for 13 aged people or homes for the aged.

Milestone: We celebrated the 99th birthday of **Martha Becker**, retired missionary to Ecuador, with a birthday party on Dec. 27.

Ray Becker, Correspondent

FAITH EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Henderson, Neb.

Michael Fink, Pastor

It was our honor to host the FEBC seminar and workshop in February.

A group of our women participated in a community weekend retreat at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City. The retreat featured a Beth Moore study on the topic of "Loving Well." It was a great way to connect with other women of our community as well as enrich our own spiritual lives.

Current Bible studies in our church include the Book of Ecclesiastes in our Sunday morning worship services, a study of the book of Amos in our adult Sunday School, and the Book of Daniel is being examined in our Sunday evening Bible studies.

Alice Decker, Correspondent

GRACE EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Abbotsford, B.C.

Dr. Warren Schatz, Pastor

We said goodbye to Worship Director **Andrew Jager** and his wife, Sharon. Andrew served at Grace Church for the past year and a half while attending Summit Pacific College. After graduating last spring

Andrew also led our Junior Youth program until late November. They are currently serving in Kamloops, B.C. Andrew and Sharon will be greatly missed, as they had been heavily involved with our young couples' group, church softball team and on the worship team. We wish them God's blessing as they move forward in His plan for their lives.

We praise God for providing leadership from within our congregation. **Walter Schroeder** is our new Director of Worship and the Arts, and **Kaylene Neufeld** is leading the Junior Youth. Kaylene was one of our youth interns several years ago.



Several people from our congregation flew to Cuba in January for a combined visit and vacation with Don and Elsie Elliot (World Team). They brought with them a plaque from last July's FEBC Convention, when the Elliots were honored with a Lifetime of Service Award, but were unable to be present to receive it.



Milestone: **Helen Dick** celebrated her 102nd birthday on Nov. 7. Helen is the wife of **Dr. John R. Dick**, who pastored Grace Church from 1959-1963. He also served as chairman of the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Confer-

ence for many years. Those attending included **Elizabeth Friesen** (niece), **Jack and Louise Friesen**, **Annie Goertz**, **Marion Owen**, **Bernie Koop**, **John Unrau**, **Gordon and Lillian Diggins**, **Peter and Margaret Heinrichs** and **Grace Toews**. Special music was provided by **Dan and Gladys Wolfe**. **Pete Heinrichs**, **Jack and Louise Friesen**, **John Unrau** and **Bernie Koop** were among those who shared special memories of Helen and her husband.

FOCUS ON OUR CHURCHES

New Members: Lisa Bradley, Marinella and Reynaldo Briones, Ashley Crawford, Alastair and Lynne McNair, Mike Racine, Sharon and Tony Richardson, and Doug and Elise Toews.

Grace Toews, Correspondent

HEARTLAND BIBLE CHURCH

Lincoln, Neb.

Scott Hecht, Pastor

We had a missions movie night in January, featuring three DVDs from SEND International. One featured work being done in Alaska and another told about witnessing to Muslims. Another told the story of Melody, who found Christ as she lived in the city then went back to her own village to witness there.

Each family received a copy of the book, "What is the Gospel?" by Greg Gilbert. Pastor Hecht has used this as the basis for a series of messages on this subject.

Treacherous streets and frigid temps have caused several cancellations of the Wednesday night activities.

Trudy Reimer, Correspondent

HODGSON BIBLE CHURCH

Hodgson, Man.

James Thiessen, Pastor

We were blessed by an excellent monologue performed by **Lorie Thiessen** of Millar College of the Bible last fall. The story depicted the life of Diet Eman during the Holocaust.

Since we are located in prime hunting grounds, we again hosted a "Hunters Sunday" in the fall. The church was decked in hunter gear, and after the morning service we enjoyed a "wild meat" potluck lunch.

The church was full for our annual Sunday school concert in December. The event also included a drama, readings and a fellowship lunch.

Sara Plett, Correspondent

JANSEN BIBLE CHURCH

Jansen, Neb.

Paul Carpenter, Pastor

A local Jansen family whose home and possessions were destroyed by fire received help at a benefit supper at the church social hall. **Morgan Stewart** and her employers at the Jansen bank were able to raise more than \$1,800 to help the family.

At our annual church business meeting in January, we voted to discontinue our

weekly Sunday evening Christian Endeavor and replace it with a short time of corporate prayer, dividing into small groups to remember the most pressing needs.

Pastor Dan Hauge of Grace Bible Church in Omaha, spoke at the major outreach ministry of our church, the annual Sweetheart Banquet in February. Decorations were heirlooms, including old quilts, wedding photos, old Bibles and stained glass windows.

Tena Dick, Correspondent

MARTENSVILLE MISSION CHURCH

Martensville, Sask.

Wilf Gaertner, Senior Pastor

At the time of this letter, it is -31 degrees outside, but that has not deterred the Daily Vacation Bible School committee from getting excited about this summer's theme of "The Big Apple Adventure." We do not have a definite date set as yet, but we are looking at the last week of August. We have the "Saddle Ridge Ranch" program from last year available for sale. You can contact Joanne Born, 306-242-3754 or Liz Braun, 306- 931-2005, for more information.

Joanne Born, Correspondent

PARADISE VALLEY CHURCH

Natoma, Kan.

Ben MacConnell, Pastor



Fifty-eight people attended the Valentine party that Sharon and I hosted at a local restaurant. Guests were serenaded by a pianist while they enjoyed smothered steak, shrimp cocktail, salad and cheese-cake. Most stayed after dinner and played table games.

I am teaching *A Stranger on the Road to Emmaus* in Lucas, Kan., on Thursday evenings. On Wednesday evenings in Natoma I am teaching "If You Want to Walk on Water, You Got to Get Out of the Boat." In Sunday school I am teaching "The Church Awakening."

Please pray for new contacts for evangelism and discipleship, and that God would bring new families as our families begin to reach out to the community.

Ben MacConnell, Correspondent

RICHER FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Richer, Man.

Simon Cheung, Pastor

At our Christmas program Pastor Simon graced the morning by singing "Silent Night" in Chinese, German and English, reminding us that praising God in any language touches the hearts of all people. The program brought an opportunity to discover "hidden talent." Many of our unassuming congregation stepped up to the mike to sing, act or play harmonica.

The Awana Christmas program was well attended. Parents enjoyed the Christmas songs and memory verses. Pastor Simon read the story of Christ's birth and gave out candy canes for all the right answers. Afterwards parents cheered as their children played games downstairs. Then ... a "holy hush" fell (the quietest an Awana room has ever been) as lights went out and tiny hands carried candlelit cupcakes. Glowing soldiers marched singing "Happy Birthday, Jesus," while leaders with baited breath hoped their hair wouldn't be "glowing" also! **Anke Karg** surprised the children with stuffed toys, and the squeals of laughter were thanks enough for her. We praise God for giving us the privilege of serving these families.

Michelle Driedger, Correspondent

SALEM CHURCH

Waldheim, Sask.

Darrell Derksen, Senior Pastor



Our first official building fund-raiser, to benefit a new addition to Salem, took place in February. The event was promoted as "FUN...d raising", and both goals were beautifully met. The room was filled with laughter and healthy competition as the bidding began for one of the dessert cakes up for auction. While snacks and drinks were provided, those wishing

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to enjoy a dessert would have to have their table win a bid. This, together with the silent auction items raised more than \$15,000. Please pray with us that we will continue to work together as we build for the future.

SARON MENNONITE CHURCH

Orienta, Okla.

Arnold Curby, Pastor

We gathered for a send-off for **Hannah Curby** on Jan. 9 before her departure for Verona, Italy, where she is serving on a short-cycle church planting team with Avant Ministries.

At a communion and fellowship dinner on Jan. 30, we enjoyed the special blessing of hearing about the ministry of **John and Jan Lohrenz**, who serve in Spain with CAM International.

Our church recently finished viewing a series of messages by Dr. David Jeremiah called "What in the World is Going On?" The series made it easy for anyone to understand end times prophecy.

Estrella Albarron shared her testimony of God's work of grace in her life at a "Celebration of Life" event that we attended at the Mennonite Brethren Church in Fairview on Feb. 13.

Melba Nickel, Correspondent

STUARTBURN GOSPEL CHAPEL

Stuartburn, Man.

Mark Funk, Pastor

The mission team going to Costa Rica had initially hoped to raise \$10,000 to buy materials and supplies to help a family there repair their home and church. The group's expectations were greatly exceeded when they received donations of more than \$17,000. Our congregation, and that of **Hodgson Bible Church**, also donated clothes, shoes, school supplies and many other items that will help this family and their 38 children.



We had a commissioning (prayer) service for the team during the worship service on Jan. 30. Eighteen people, including two from Hodgson Bible, left for Costa Rica the next day for three weeks.

The theme of our week of prayer in

January was "Holy Quietness." Sessions included a communion service; a prayer night for the "Love Costa Rica" mission's trip; a prayer time for missionaries supported by the church family; a "Silent Night" to pray alone or with family; and a night of emphasis on youth, entitled "The Next Generation Seeks God."

Lynden Broesky, a student at Steinbach Bible College and also a member of Stuartburn, spoke at a January worship service. He shared his thankfulness for the people who encouraged him to develop a deeper relationship with Christ, particularly the ETS (Equip to Serve) group that he and his wife, Laurie, met with each week.

Marilyn D. Thiessen, Correspondent

VITA BIBLE CHURCH

Vita, Man.

Our ladies had a successful bake sale to raise funds for kitchen improvements. Their January meeting included a "Treasure Exchange" and an inspiring message from **Susan Hoy**.

Fourteen people distributed 180 New Testaments, information about our church and an invitation to our annual Christmas program to the residents of Vita.

Jane Roman, Correspondent

Legacy Giving

Today's resources for tomorrow's ministries

Breaking News on Your IRA!

A Cost Effective Way to Give ...

On Dec. 17, 2010, President Obama signed into law Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and the Job Creation Act of 2010, which includes an extension of the IRA charitable rollover.

The new tax bill extends the IRA rollover throughout 2011. Those who are age 70 ½ and older can make charitable gifts directly from their IRA accounts without paying income taxes on that money.

The gifts are limited to a maximum of \$100,000 in each year and must be made directly to the charitable organization (gifts

to donor-advised funds and supporting organizations do not qualify).

Because this legislation has been enacted so late in the year, it contains a provision allowing transfers made by Jan. 31, 2011 to count as 2010 transfers.

For more details, please visit www.febclegacy.org/ira. From there, if you would like further assistance, you may fill out a contact form and a representative from Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches will be in touch with you.





Focus on FEBC Church Planting

By Harvey Schultz

Refocusing the Church Planting Ministry at Natoma, Kansas

In 2005 Ben and Sharon MacConnell approached the FEBC asking us to partner with them in their new church planting venture. A three-man team was dispatched to assess the potential. During that visit, each team member, individually before the Lord, came to the conclusion that God was asking us to say “yes” to the Natoma request, even though prior to that they had leaned toward a “no” recommendation. Subsequently, the Commission on Church Planting concurred.

Late last fall another three-man assessment team went to Natoma to carefully review the situation, evaluate it and make recommendations. Should this ministry be maintained or should it be abandoned due to the lack of visible, local fruit?

To put the situation in context, it is important to recall several important principles that a church planter should follow in order to build into the DNA of the new church principles and practices which will ensure its long-term growth, health and stability. Some of these are:

- **Identify with and penetrate the local community and seek its welfare.**
- **Don't put the cart before the horse.**
- **Wait until local believers are ready and able to assume local ownership.**

Identifying with the community is especially important in the non-urban communities. People are wary of the “evangelist.” But they welcome someone who seeks the welfare of their community, identifies with their school, civic institutions, community events, volunteer organizations and who makes genuine friends among them. That builds a bond of trust, causing people to be more willing to listen to the Gospel messenger.

In the early days the spiritual ministry in the community should focus more on outreach than on developing local church structure and administration. Structure and administration should become the focus only when an identifiable group of Christians emerges, senses that need and

is ready to assume full ownership for the same.

When Ben and Sharon MacConnell approached the FEBC in 2005, several initial steps had already been taken in just a few months. They had organized a church, adopted a constitution, obtained legal recognition and bought an old church building. We were impressed that the local group had assumed that kind of ownership.

However, it has since become evident that the cart was before the horse. There weren't enough local believers who could assume, on an ongoing basis, the responsibilities attached to legal recognition, budget preparation, financial reports, building repairs and janitorial duties. Those who attended benefited from these facilities and structures but were unable to assume full responsibility for them. Furthermore, since then some of them have moved out of the area.

Yet God had made it clear that He wanted the MacConnells to start up this ministry, and He had made it clear that He wanted the FEBC to partner with them. What now?

The MacConnells have done an admirable job of identifying with the local community. Everyone knows them. He is regarded as *the* town pastor who is called upon for prayer at public functions, funerals when someone without church affiliation dies, etc. He was instrumental in organizing the community choir and has even been encouraged to run for school board trustee. But although he has led people to the Lord, there has been little local, lasting fruit. Even though Natoma is not a large town, it has seen growth. It is in the heart of an extensive rural area where mainline churches have lost out, and a population of 2,200 to 2,300 people is without a local Gospel witness.

As the team assessed the situation, they realized, and Ben concurred, that out of ignorance, some basic church planting principles had not been

observed in the early stages of the ministry. But Ben still felt called by God to Natoma. As Ben and the team waited on the Lord, they agreed to implement the following proposals:

- The MacConnells should stay in Natoma.
- Planned FEBC subsidies, although on a decreasing scale, should be maintained.
- The MacConnells will seek to raise additional financial support from outside sources until local believers are able to fund the gap between the financial need and the subsidies.
- Ben will approach the ministry more like a missionary than a church planter. That means that he:
 - will downplay the local church organizational aspect.
 - will focus on developing home Bible studies in the area (he now has three and is in the process of developing a fourth).
 - will teach Bible study attendees the principles of true discipleship.

Local church development/organization will be put on the back burner until spiritual and numerical growth indicate that a large enough number of people want it and are able to assume full responsibility for the same.

Heartland Extension and the Commission on Church Planting have since given their stamp of approval to this plan. The former has resumed modest subsidies.

We must commit ourselves to prayer and earnestly ask God to intervene powerfully by His Holy Spirit to bring people to faith, cause them to grow in their faith until they see the value and need of a strong, local Bible-believing church, and are willing and able to assume responsibility for the same. **Let us pray as though success depended on our prayers.** Let us also pray that God would give the MacConnells courage, strength, vision and perseverance along with emotional, spiritual and physical stamina to carry on faithfully.

NO ENDORSEMENT

THE RECORD

BIRTHS AND ADOPTIONS

Community Bible Church Omaha, Neb.

- Lane Reese to John and Jenni Kadner, Jan. 11
- Wyatt Hudson to Ted and Alicia Smith, Feb 12

Cornerstone Bible Church Mountain Lake, Minn.

- Courtney Addison to Corey and Dana Schroeder, Dec. 17; grandparents are Allen and Janice Schroeder; great-grandparents are Louis and Sophie Klassen

Dalmeny Bible Church Dalmeny, Sask.

- Jalyn Marie to Ryan and Miranda Klassen, Dec. 17; grandparents are Rod and Carla Petryshyn; great-grandparents are Dick and Ruth Krahn

Evangelical Bible Church Omaha, Neb.

- Sawyer John to John and Andrea Nelson, Dec. 16; grandparents are Steve and Nancy Nelson
- Cody Benjamin to Jeremiah and Sarah Kuhns, Jan. 12; grandparents are Carl and Marlene Kuhns
- Lathan Ronan to Michael and Malinda Boeker, adopted on Dec. 7; grandparents are Paul and Fayth Boeker and Verne and Jan Johnson

- Mateya Michelene and Matthias Michelet to Troy and Billie Jo Sedam, adopted on Dec. 30

Heartland Bible Church Lincoln, Neb.

- Matthea Grace to Scott and Melanie Griess; grandparents are Allen and Sally Griess

Hodgson Bible Church Hodgson, Man.

- Nelson Manuel to Robert and Natalia Wiens, Dec. 9

Vita Bible Church Vita, Man.

- Nathan Kristopher to Kris and Jessica Driedger, Jan. 19

Salem Church Waldheim, Sask.

- Jayce William to Willie and Tanya Curtis, Dec. 8; grandparents are Gerald and Kathy Fehr; great-grandparents are Harvey and Agnes Thiessen and John and Alice Fehr
- Brayden Randy to Scott and Heather Langelaar, Dec. 18
- Asher Morgan to Dorman and Shantel Baltazar, Dec. 30; grandparents are Harvey and Agnes Thiessen
- Therron Harley to Bryan and Marian Lester, Jan. 15

Stuartburn Gospel Chapel Stuartburn, Man.

- Averi Natalia to Arnold and Wendy Thiessen, Dec. 20

WEDDINGS

Countryside Bible Church Meade, Kan.

- Becky Bruton, daughter of Shane and Anna Walter and Mark and Cynthia Bruton, to Jordan Herrera, Jan. 1

Evangelical Bible Church Omaha, Neb.

- Mishel Ferguson to Todd Phillips, Nov. 7

Vita Bible Church Vita, Man.

- Allison Poetker to Max Buechi, Jan. 15



DEATHS

Cornerstone Bible Church Mountain Lake, Minn.

- Arthur Schmidt (87), Jan. 4; served as a missionary to Ecuador for 34 years
- Marie Wiens (100), Jan. 10

Countryside Bible Church Meade, Kan.

- Pete C. Doerksen (87), Jan. 5

Evangelical Bible Church Omaha, Neb.

- Pat Carlson (78), Jan. 25

Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church Lustre, Mont.

- Theresa Ortmann (68), Jan. 6

Grace Evangelical Bible Church Abbotsford, B.C.

- Ann Friesen (90), Oct. 13

Heartland Bible Church Lincoln, Neb.

- Neretta Peters (91), Dec. 16