

A PUBLICATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCHES



Fellowship Focus

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Renewal



Shine the light of Christ this New Year!

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President's Challenge

Blaine Donaldson, President, Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches

Owe No One Anything Except ...

Romans 13:8 says, "... Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law" (ESV). While this love has its greatest fulfillment within the body of Christ, it also applies to the way that we interact with non-Christian people around us. But what should loving non-Christians look like in our day-to-day lives?

In order to love or care about someone, we typically need to spend time with them and get to know them. It is hard to care for someone if you have no idea what is happening in their lives. Most of us need to be very intentional about this with non-Christians. If we do not go out of our way to get to know non-Christians, we will find ourselves only spending time with Christians. We will find ourselves only loving Christians.

However, the Gospel calls us to go to the non-Christians with the hope that is found in Jesus. We need to be intentional about spending time with non-Christians.

It is so easy to see the changes of today as a barrier to the way that we used to share the Gospel. However, these very changes often afford new opportunities to share Jesus with non-Christians. A generation ago, one of the most effective ways to reach people was to invite them to church. People thought of the church in positive terms. Most people would think something like this: "I do not

attend church. I am busy, and I am not really into church, but I know that if I am really in trouble that I should go back to church to find help." People saw church as the primary way to connect with God if they had any realization that they needed God.

Today, people have a general cynicism toward large institutions. Whether it is big government, big corporations or big religion, people are disinclined to trust these organizations. People do not think that answers to the important things in life can be found in an institution.

While a non-Christian is disposed to reject religion, they are uniquely poised to receive the love of Jesus expressed through you.

Yet, we owe them love. While a non-Christian is disposed to reject religion, they are uniquely poised to receive the love of Jesus expressed through you. They need to believe that someone cares about them, and then they will seek them out and allow them to speak into their lives.

What are the opportunities to connect with non-Christians? There are many more than I can list, but I will suggest a few:

- **Volunteer:** Find a place that needs volunteers, and serve as unto the Lord

there. Choose a cause about which you are passionate. You will find non-Christians serving with you who care about similar things. I recently spoke to a Christian woman who was committed to stopping the sex trade. She went to a national meeting of activists. There were dozens of people from across the country there. She said that she was the only Christian there. She has had many open doors to share her faith through this service.

- **Hospitality:** Most of us have many neighbors who are not believers. Invite them into your home. Get to know them. Pray with them. Do things together.
- **Join clubs:** Find something you have a passion for and join clubs where you will find non-Christians with similar interests.
- **Social media:** Bring Christ to bear when you are making meaningful connections through social media. While we want to avoid preaching condemnation and superficial platitudes, there are often opportunities as unbelievers express their hurts and frustrations. There are often great opportunities to be salt and light.

We owe love to non-Christians. May we intentionally find ways to love them and share Jesus with them. ■

Donna Schmidt with the Lord

After 54 years of faithful service, Donna Schmidt was called home to the Lord on Dec. 2. Donna was the wife of Loyal Schmidt, an FEBC missionary and pastor.

She arrived in the Congo in 1954 as a medical missionary, while Loyal was serving there under the Congo Inland Mission. The couple married in 1957, but was evacuated with their family in 1960. Although they returned to minister for a couple of more years, the political climate deteriorated, and Loyal was captured in 1964. Upon his release, they moved to California for two years.

The Schmidts then moved to Omaha, Neb., where Loyal worked with Grace Bible Institute (now Grace University). After their two

sons were kidnapped and one killed, they moved to Canada with their three boys and pastored the Langham, Sask., Evangelical Bible Church for six years, followed by Christian Fellowship Church of Rhineland, Sask., for another six years.

Their last move was to Henderson, Neb., to lead Grace Mission. Donna served the mission alongside Loyal, working in the office. Loyal did public relations for Grace Mission and served as director for 14 years. They led teams to Haiti and Mexico. In 1999 Loyal retired from the directorship but continued to serve as office manager, a position he still holds to date.

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Comment

By Sharon Berg, Editor



Happy New Year! Welcome to the first issue of *Fellowship Focus* for 2015. For me, it is my last issue as editor. In case you didn't read Comment in the November/December issue, I'll briefly bring you up to date: I am stepping down after nearly 12 years. I'll continue my other job of working with special needs children, but I'd like to be more available for any new opportunities to work with children as God directs.

Editing the *Focus* these many years has given me a deeper appreciation for the Fellowship's history, its heart for missions, planting churches, and sense of community. Of course, the best part of the job was interacting with people. Some I know only through our email conversations; others through annual conventions. It has also taught me about the importance of the church news we publish. The news our correspondents share in each issue offers a small window into the life of the churches that make up the Fellowship. Obviously, there many differences between life at a small church situated on the Canadian prairie compared to one in the midst of a major metropolitan area. Yet the 43 churches that make up the FEBC still have ties through faith and history.

Hopefully, I've come close to fulfilling the FEBC mission for the *Focus*, which is to be a publication that educates, encourages and edifies our congregations. Now I'm looking forward to keeping up with Fellowship life under a new editor in the future.

Thank you all for your feedback and prayers through the years. Blessings to you and your loved ones in the New Year.

Blessings,

Sharon

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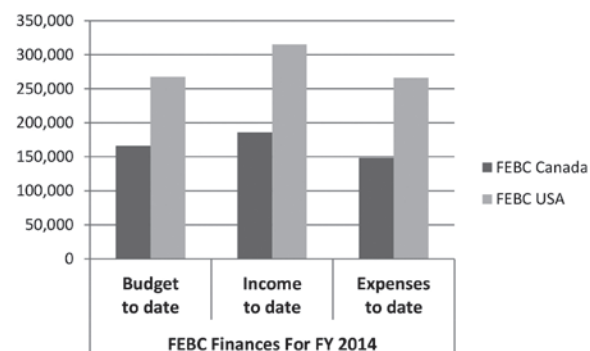
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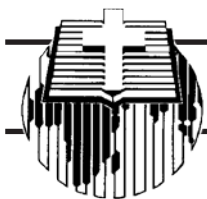
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The *Fellowship Focus* is available to read online. Check it out!

<http://www.fellowshipforward.org>



Fellowship Views

A Few Good Men and Women

Many positions on the U.S. Board of Directors and the various international commissions are still open. People who are interested in serving our Fellowship should contact their local church board. People nominated by their local church can be appointed by the Board of Directors until the next election. For more information, contact Mr. Don Krehbiel at don.febc@cox.net.

New Directors

FEBC Canada has appointed two new directors: **Ed Durksen** from the **Grunthal Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church** of Grunthal, Man., and **Verne Brown** from **Grace Evangelical Bible Church** in Abbotsford, B.C. Ed has had many years of experience on the Commission of Trustees and the FEBC Canada Board of Directors.

FEBC USA has appointed **Wendell Klassen** from Cornerstone Bible Church of Mountain Lake, Minn. Wendell has also had experience on the Commission of Trustees.

Appointments for directors or commission members are made by the national boards of directors after individuals are nominated by their church. Appointments are only valid until the next election when the appointees may be elected for a full term.

With the Lord

Retired missionary **Martha Becker** went to be with the Lord on Nov. 10, only seven weeks away from her 103rd birthday! Martha was a home missionary first in Ranier, Minn., and later in Floodwood. She ministered to the women and children through Bible studies, Vacation Bible School, released-time classes in the schools, and Sunday school. Her co-worker at Floodwood was **Bertha Neufeldt**, who later would become a career missionary to Japan.

H.H. Dick, the Secretary [Administrator] of the Fellowship, challenged Martha to use her skills and experience to become a missionary to Ecuador under GMU. When Martha was ready to go to Ecuador, one family in Meade, Kan., committed to provide all her monthly support! That family supported her fully for several years, then provided partial support for all the remaining years she was in Ecuador. At 37, Martha headed out to a new geography, new culture and new language and thrived for 28 years! When she retired she continued to have an active ministry in the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church and the Marion/Freeman area of South Dakota for almost 37 more years!

Her autobiography, "Aunt Martha's Story," is available on request from our office as a PDF document. Write to info@febcministries.org.

Personnel Changes

Sharon Berg has been the editor of the *Fellowship Focus* for 12 years! This will be the last issue she edits. We deeply appreciate her generous and faithful service. She has developed a great cadre of church reporters. We will miss her skilled editing that makes all of us writers look good!

At this point, the Directors have not named a new editor.



Paul Boeker, who has served as Administrator since 2001, retired in December. The Boekers were charter members of Community Bible Church of Omaha in 1969, but moved away from Omaha and did not reconnect with the Fellowship until 1986 when Paul was called to pastor the Meade Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church (now Countryside Bible Church). In 1988, Paul was elected to the

Commission on Missions, and served as a member or chair for nine years. He designed and published "Forget-Me-Not," the FEBC Prayer Journal that introduced our missionaries and encouraged prayer for them.

In 1999, Paul was hired to succeed **Robert (Bob) Frey** as FEBC Administrator. He worked with Bob for a year-and-a-half until Bob's retirement. Since 2001, Paul has overseen two major moves of the Fellowship office, as well as caring for the daily functions and assisting the commissions in their work. Paul will seek part-time employment for the next few years.

His wife, **Fayth**, has worked alongside of him, both as janitor for the office and as the Fellowship Hostess. Many of our missionaries and directors [Executive Committee members] have stayed in the Boekers' guestrooms during visits to Omaha and enjoyed Fayth's cooking and hospitality.

The Directors have transferred Paul's responsibilities to **Blaine Donaldson**.

Whom Do I Contact?

With all the personnel changes, it has not been clear how to reach the Fellowship. So here are a few points of contact:

- For general information: info@febcministries.org
- For issues with the *Fellowship Focus*, such as address changes: fellowshipfocus@febcministries.org
- For Canadian insurance or financial questions: febc.canada@febcministries.org
- For FEBC USA finance questions: finance@febcministries.org
- For church related questions (pastor search, ordination, conflict resolution teams, etc.): churches@febcministries.org
- For leadership or affiliation questions, or to schedule the President to speak: president@febcministries.org

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Proclaiming Christ around the World

By Marilyn Lester
Commission on Missions

This month we continue to introduce the new missionaries who were approved at the 2014 FEBC Convention. I would like to repeat the qualifications the Commission on Missions looks for in an FEBC missionary candidate. First, and most importantly, the candidate must be born again and have a burden to lead other people to a relationship with Christ. Second, he or she should demonstrate a servant spirit by working in ministries in the local church. Third, a candidate should become well-informed of the doctrinal position and policies of prospective mission agencies, possibly under the direction of the local pastor or missions committee.

It is with that in mind that we introduce to you **Joanne Redekop** from Dalmeny Bible Church. She grew up in a Christian home and hearing missionary reports in church, thinking "It would be so cool to go be a missionary overseas someday." However, she didn't really think that was God's plan for her. Joanne admits, "Throughout school, I grew in my faith, but never shared it with anyone, as I felt that was for others to do, not me. When I was in university, I was challenged to share my faith more, and with



encouragement started to do so. I ended up going on a six-week mission trip to Uganda through Power to Change. It was incredible to see God at work in the words He would give me and the people He would lead us to. After I came back, I felt God calling me back there someday."

After she finished her degree, she worked at a hospital as a registered nurse, and the desire to serve on the mission field kept growing. She attended the Urbana Conference with funding from the FEBC Commission on Missions and then started contacting mission organizations. Africa Inland Mission felt right, as its focus and approach to missions lined up with her passions. "They focus on coming alongside a community, getting to know the people, sharing the Gospel with them, and then discipling them to create a lasting impact."

Joanne will go to Kenya with Africa Inland Mission in January 2015 until December 2016. She will work with an unreached people group that practices spiritism and witchcraft. Joanne will serve on a team with two families, four other single women, and one couple who will be the team leaders. They will use their different talents and skills to win friendships and share the Gospel. Through discipling the new believers, they hope to establish a Christ-centered church that will be run by the nationals.

Another missionary to whom we gave final approval at the Convention was **Michael Folkerts** from Henderson, Neb.'s Faith Evangelical Bible Church. He is serving through Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ) on the campuses of several Nebraska universities.

Michael grew up in a small town close to Henderson. He placed his trust in the Lord through his mother who came to know the Lord through Cru (then Campus Crusade) her sophomore year in college. He always dreamed of being a famous football player or powerful politician making an impact for God's kingdom through public appearances. But failing to make the cut on the University of Nebraska football team and experiencing some other humbling events, "the Lord was clear that he had different plans for my life."

During one Christmas break he attended a Cru winter conference in Denver where he learned about Cru's mission to evangelize and disciple the world through various types of ministries. That was instrumental in

drawing Michael to Cru. Cru's campus ministry vision is "that every student on campus will have the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ; that believers will be built up in their faith and grow in their understanding of God through fellowship and discipleship; and that each student in our campus movements will be equipped to be a life-long laborer for Christ."



After graduating from University of Nebraska in 2010, he interned with Cru on the university's Lincoln, Neb., campus for a year and then interned with the JESUS Film Mission Trips in Orlando, Fla. After his second year of internship, he joined Cru full time with the JESUS Film Media department for almost a year. During this time he helped develop a JESUS Film app for android phones.

Just recently, Michael returned to Nebraska to work with the campus ministry on several college campuses in eastern Nebraska: University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Doane College in Crete and Midlands College in Fremont, with the possibility of adding a few more campuses after the first of the year. This ministry involves evangelism, discipleship, and mentoring the young men on campus. It is Michael's responsibility to coach and disciple the student leaders on each campus. He will also help organize a men's retreat in February and help lead a mission trip to San Diego, Calif., this summer.

Both Michael and Joanne need our prayers and support. Joanne is embarking on a brand new mission career far away from home. There will be times of loneliness and the challenge of learning a new language, new culture and working as a team with relative strangers. Michael is in transition to a new ministry, and each campus has its own culture that he needs to learn. He is also building new relationships with the young men who are already in place as his student leaders.

The Apostle Paul told the Philippians, "I thank my God every time I remember you" (Phil. 1:3 NIV). I thank God for these young people who have a passion to serve God and spread the Gospel to those who have not heard. ■

Creating Opportunities for Radio Follow-Up

By Benny and Esther Goertzen

Evangelical Mennonite Conference, Paraguay

"We don't hand out calendars, we preach the Gospel," was a pastor's reply when we offered him Radio Mensajero's (RM) calendars to distribute in his church and community. Different views, different approaches in evangelism. Nothing new, right? We insist that our mandate and desire is to communicate the Good News in a relevant way; others are more reserved. In radio-follow up we find it essential to work together with local churches to provide them with tools for effective evangelism and discipleship training for new believers; therefore, we continuously look for a common ground, a platform, to combine forces.

In Paraguay, radio is known to be an effective tool for evangelism, especially to connect with listeners and win their trust. To have RM's calendar displayed in a household or a public place visibly affirms: "We like what we're hearing!" Some have saved all calendars for more than 15 years.



If listeners — be they Latino, Mennonite or Aboriginal — feel respected, loved and cared for, they open up to other ministries. Yes, some will reject our programming because of our faith. Others gradually open up to our presence. Some receive Jesus, and RM has helped them in the process.

It takes special holistic programming to win listeners and keep them connected to RM. We meet them at their level, in their world, on their platform. In radio work we assimilate these platforms as we produce programs in which we embrace their interest and touch their personal and family needs. Our love and care for them is also felt when we hand out calendars, distribute Christian magazines, give seminars, provide counselling or do special projects in their community. That builds trust. It opens closed doors.

This story illustrates how various activities work together with media: Flora attended a workshop promoted by her university. The speaker was from Radio Mensajero. Motivated by a promotional sticker, she dialed 100.9 FM. She and her Mom began to listen daily. A few years later Fermina called our office requesting the special calendar we offered. On our next visit we personally delivered the calendar and also shared with her how to be 100 percent sure about spending eternity in



heaven. "That's what I would like to know!" she exclaimed. Right there on the street, Fermina committed her life to Jesus. During another visit, together with Esther, Fermina opened up about a difficult relationship within the family. "I've been hoping to talk with someone for so long," she said. An opportune time for ambulant counselling! Opposition from her traditional church for listening to an evangelical station increased. In spite of it, Fermina later phoned to ask for good materials to teach children in her (traditional) church.

We keep in contact with local pastors, encouraging them to disciple new believers like Fermina. Pray that we will be faithful in proclaiming Jesus through radio, but also wise to know what platforms to use as we join hands with others in the radio follow-up ministry in Paraguay. ■

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Churches Seeking Pastors

Please ask God to provide pastors for churches without a shepherd. If you know of someone who might be a good fit for these rural/small town churches, please pass this information on to them.

- **Community Bible Church** of Wolf Point, Mont., is seeking a pastor. For additional information, contact: Mr. Richard Desch at desch5@yahoo.com or phone (406) 653-2974 or (406) 471-3030 (cell). Résumés may also be mailed to 330 Dawson St., Wolf Point, MT 59201.
- **Grunthal EMB Church** in Grunthal, Man., is seeking a fulltime senior pastor. Please send enquiries and résumés to: grunthalembelders@gmail.com

- **Hodgson Bible Church** of Hodgson, Man., is searching for a pastor who can bring God's Word to a small town, rural setting. For more information, contact Ted Hartog at tchartog@lakenet.ca (phone 204-372-6990) or contact John Plett at john50@mymts.net (phone 204-372-6700).
- **Vita Bible Church** of Vita, Man., is seeking a full-time pastor, someone who has spiritual and character maturity with pastoral experience and is able to connect with rural people in a small farming community. Contact Jake Funk, chairman of Vita Bible Church at (204) 427-2875 or send résumé to Vita Bible Church, PO Box 306, Vita, MB R0A 2K0. ■

An open letter to FEBC women across the continent ...

Dear FEBC Sisters,

Last year's theme for our Commission on Women's Ministries was "Connections." We on the Commission feel that we have begun to have some growing connection with each one of you. Now it's time for *you* to make the connections with each other. We want to encourage you wonderful women to stretch and begin to make connections outside the four walls of your church.

I remember as a young woman when I started to receive invitations to "ladies meetings." There was something the ladies did as a group that they called "Secret Sisters." I think it still goes on, but let me explain for those who are not familiar with it: Someone in the group gathered names and put them on little slips of paper. These usually included birth dates and anniversaries. Those were then put into a box or hat, and each woman drew a name. Those participating promised to pray for that sister and remember her in special secret ways throughout the year. It was always exciting at the end of the year when the real identity of your secret sister was revealed. It was fun, and it encouraged prayer and connection with each other.

The FEBC Commission on Women wants to do something like this on a *grand scale* this year. It would *not* be a secret, though. We would like to partner church women's ministries groups in our Fellowship. These couplings would:

- Figure out a way to introduce themselves to their partner church — maybe a picture; a power point presentation about their group, their town, their church, etc.; a phone call; a Skype date; or a treasure box full of interesting "stuff" from where *they* live that explains who *they* are.

Then ...

- The church group partners would try to set up prayer channels, promising to share needs with each other and pray for each other over the next 12 months.

Then ...

- Church group partners would check out the possibilities of sharing the same Bible Study curriculum with the other group and meeting every few weeks for a Skype Bible study. Or they could work on a project together (make a quilt across the miles?) The possibilities are endless!

Then ...

- *This is the big one!* Where possible, we would like to encourage all the groups, or as many as possible, to meet on one of two designated weekends in the spring for a "Face to Face" encounter. Maybe one could meet at the other's church, or a place in between (a camp for a retreat, or hall in a town midway between the churches). How fun and exciting it would be to hug the lady you have been praying for but never met; to get to know this other group of Christian women you have been connecting with face to face!

I realize that some churches have no other FEBC church nearby, so they will need to be very creative. Maybe they could both do the same event and Skype each other on the big screen for that sense of togetherness. Creativity is not in short supply for women!

We want your input, too. You can contact me via Facebook at W Com Connections to share your ideas.

We will send letters to FEBC churches soon and want to hear from you ASAP so we can begin pairing you up. What a cool way to connect across our continent with prayer and care, because we are *sisters* in Christ.

Let the partnering begin! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

With love,

Beth Fast for the Commission on Women;
With **Paula Folkers, Sharon Skillman,**
Sharon MacConnell, and Jen Funk



As we enter a new year and begin a new journey, may we have this prayer on our lips. May the Lord make us fruitful for His kingdom in 2015.

Just One Request

Dear Master for this coming year
Just one request I bring:
I do not pray for happiness,
Or any earthly thing —
I do not ask to understand
The way Thou leadest me,
But this I ask: Teach me to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.
I want to know Thy guiding voice,
To walk with Thee each day.
Dear Master make me swift to hear
And ready to obey.
And thus the year I now begin
A happy year will be —
If I am seeking just to do
The thing that pleaseth Thee.

-Author unknown



Visit W Com Connections on Facebook



Focus on the Word

Spiritual Warfare

By Harvey Schultz

In my previous article in the November/December issue of *Fellowship Focus*, we turned our attention to Ephesians 6:12: **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”** Spiritual warfare doesn’t happen only when there is some obvious manifestation of evil powers. We are engaged in spiritual warfare every time we seek to advance God’s kingdom. We aren’t instructed to “pray against” evil powers in order to be effective. We are called to pray to God. As we do, He binds the forces of evil in heavenly realms, and victories are won on earth.

Daniel spent three weeks in prayer. At the end of that time an angel arrived and assured him that the answer had been sent to him on the *first* day of his prayer vigil, but that the “prince of the Persian kingdom” (an evil angel) resisted him for 21 days. When the angel Michael joined in the fight, the first angel was able to get through to Daniel with the answer (Daniel 10:2-14).

Wow! For 21 days Daniel had wrestled against evil forces in the heavenlies. Was he aware of that? I suspect not. Were his prayers effectual in enabling the angel to come to him? I believe so. In fact, Bible scholars are no doubt right when they say that Daniel’s prayers were crucial not only in getting the answer through, but also in causing the Persian Kingdom to be favorable to the Jews in the future.

My wife and I lived and served in a city of France, which, according to the local police chief, was known to the national French Police force as a hotbed of demonism and sexual perversion. We felt the oppression of evil forces day in and day out. It was like a heavy, wet blanket hanging over you, stifling your spiritual vitality.

At one point we gathered together a team of seasoned missionaries and Bible school students to help us conduct a week-long evangelistic blitz which included door-to-door work and evangelistic services in the evenings. The first night of those services was a disaster! The atmosphere was heavy and oppressive. Our speaker, an eloquent French evangelist, stumbled over his words. Later he would say that it seemed like everything he said was thrown back at him. The door-to-door work was tedious and fruitless.

The next morning I cancelled our planned activities, called the team together and announced that we were going to engage in prayer and would not leave that room until the Spirit of the Lord gave us the freedom to do so. Then we went to prayer. We did not pray against any evil forces. Rather, we asked God to open doors, to give our speaker liberty, to give us tangible results, to give us opportunities to share the Gospel, to create interest in people’s hearts, to protect us physically, etc.

All at once something changed. Prayers turned to praise. The spirit of heaviness we had felt was gone. In its place there was a sense of spiritual freedom. I brought the prayer meeting to an end, stepped out of the house to pick up the daily mail which was being delivered just then and within seconds was sharing the Gospel with the mailman — something which had never happened before. The door-to-door ministry that day discovered hungry hearts. That evening, the speaker was once again the eloquent French evangelist we had known. His message was powerful.

However, a nurse who had been studying the Bible with us did not attend the meeting that night. We were disappointed. We had prayed so much for her salvation. The next morning I took extra time to pray for her. But the Spirit of God would not allow me to pray. Instead, He overwhelmed me with a spirit of praise and with a deep inner conviction that the battle had been won. She

did show up that evening and grabbed my arm as I greeted her, exclaiming: “It’s done!” I replied simply: “I know.” “How?” she wanted to know. “The Spirit told me,” was my reply. Today, she is still walking with the Lord and serving Him at her husband’s side.

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Prayers turned to praise. The
spirit of heaviness we had felt
was gone. In its place there was
a sense of spiritual freedom.*

There were more such experiences. All of them left us in awe as we saw God at work in answer to persevering, faithful prayer. It was always obvious that battles had been won in the invisible world. While I don’t recall that we ever “prayed against” evil forces, I do recall that we were very conscious that we were in a spiritual battle. We also recall that on several occasions the Lord gave us inner assurance of victories weeks and, sometimes, months before we actually saw the answer. His Spirit witnessed to our spirit that the victory had been won and that we were to praise Him for the victory.

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests ... always keep on praying ...”
(Ephesians 6:18)

To this day we remain convinced that we are always engaged in spiritual warfare every time we seek to advance the kingdom of God. The spiritual forces of evil must be defeated if we want to see victory. Only persevering, united prayer addressed to God in faith will accomplish that.

Scriptures taken from the New International Version ■

FOCUS on our CHURCHES

COUNTRYSIDE BIBLE CHURCH

Meade, Kan.

Chuck Finster, Pastor

At our annual Harvest Festival in November, **Joe and Denise Goossen** (*Avant*) and **Bart Horton**, who is on staff at the Grace Bible Church in Hutchinson, were our speakers.

The women enjoyed a Christmas candlelight dessert, when we remembered our missionaries with cards and a monetary gift. The deacons and wives hosted the Senior Adult Christmas Luncheon. Countryside was in charge of the worship service at Lone Tree Retirement Center one Sunday in December, and also with supplying the local food bank for the month.

We welcomed **Taylor Wiens**, our pastoral assistant for the next year and a half, at a Christmas “come and go” event at Pastor Finster’s home.

Mary Friesen, Correspondent

CROSSPOINT BIBLE CHURCH

Omaha, Neb.

Dr. Don Pahl, Senior Pastor

Our biggest news: The Evangelical Bible Church of Omaha, Neb., by an overwhelming vote of the membership, recently became **Crosspoint Bible Church!** EBC’s Elder Board brought the recommendation to the church membership:

- to refocus on the Cross of Christ and the Great Commission
- to provide a name suitable to both campuses, as Crosspoint prepares to launch its second campus near Bennington
- to diminish the negative impact of defining “evangelical” to unbelievers or new believers;
- to focus on the distinctives of “evangelicalism” (conversion, activism, the Bible, the Cross) rather than on the negative cultural implication of “evangelical.”

Sometimes being *labeled* “evangelical” hinders us from *being* evangelical! Evangelicals are people of the Gospel, and at the heart of the Gospel is the cross of Jesus. We intend to be solidly evangelical as well as winsome toward the lost as we live out the daily life of the Cross and share the Gospel of Jesus.

We enjoyed all of our traditional activities in December: our Christmas musical, “Joy, Joy, Joy”; our “Carols & Chili” night (we go caroling to a number of ministries as well as to homes to carol, then return to the church to enjoy a chili supper); and, of course, our special worship service on Christmas Eve.

We recently celebrated one baptism.

Sherrie Lindsey, Correspondent

NORTHEAST BIBLE CHURCH

Calgary, Alta.

John Fehr, Pastor

Winter has descended on Calgary with lots of snow and cold, but that hasn’t deterred people from coming out to church. We’ve had several newcomers join us in the past month, and we thank God for the opportunity to welcome them into our church family.

In November, some of our Youth Group and Junior Church members helped us remember the sacrifices made by our Canadian soldiers to keep our land “Strong and Free.” We watched a video depicting some of the experiences of war and the high price paid for our protection. Together we gave thanks for the many who gave their lives for our freedom, and we prayed for those who have returned from war with life-altering injuries.

Julie Ann Simpson, Correspondent



CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH

Steinbach, Man.

Jared Hiebert, Pastor

Cornerstone held a special Sunday morning service on Oct. 19 in honor of our associate pastor, **Doug Reimer**, as he was officially ordained as a pastor in the FEBC. **Mark Funk**, pastor of **Stuartburn Gospel Chapel**, spoke at the ordination. We are so very blessed and thankful for our two pastors!

We welcomed two new members, and celebrated the baptism of one of those new members.

Our deacons hosted a seniors Christmas Faspa (an ethnic meal) on Dec. 7. We enjoyed great fellowship, food, special music and a devotional. Once again, we celebrated the birth of Christ our King at our annual Candlelight Christmas Eve service.

Marsella Wiebe, Correspondent

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FOCUS on our CHURCHES

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GRACE EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Abbotsford, B.C.

Ryan Peixoto, Pastor

We hosted a parenting seminar in October, led by our own **David and Melissa McVety** of Doing Family Right. Several of our families attended and heard topics that included "WebKids: Protecting your Kids in a Digital World" and "Building Self-Confident Kids."

FEBC President Blaine Donaldson joined us in November and shared "Serving From The Heart" and "Being Overcome by God's Heart."

Our youth are preparing a missions trip in August 2015 to serve at the Gleaners in Oliver, B.C., a Christian charitable organization. They hosted a soup and bun luncheon fundraiser in November and raised more than \$800. Praise The Lord!

Our Ladies Ministry hosted "Taking Time to Give Thanks," an evening of testimony. **Janet Hattrick**, one of the committee members, shared her testimony of living as a single mom and being thankful. It was a powerful testimony and a great time to connect with the ladies in the church. More than 40 ladies attended. Our ladies also handed out leaves to everyone in the church to fill out for Thanksgiving, providing the chance to write for what they were thankful. The

leaves were later displayed on our gym walls during our Thanksgiving Fellowship Lunch. It was so powerful to see the many ways everyone



was thankful, and such a great reminder for all of us during this time of year.

Our First Christmas Banquet, where Elvis made an appearance, was a chance for our care groups to invite non-Christian friends and family members to enjoy an evening of fun together.



Diana Dyck, Correspondent

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

Omaha, Neb.

Charles Tschetter, Senior Pastor

During the Christmas season we again participated in Advent Conspiracy, "doing Christmas differently" as we "worship fully, spend less, give more and love all." Giving for this year's projects will go toward training pastors and church leaders in Asia, purchasing first-floor windows for Diamond Evangelical Church in Saint Vincent, and assisting the ministries of Gospel Recordings Network and the Good News Jail and Prison Ministry.

Many from our congregation spent an afternoon caroling in our adopted neighborhood through the Abide Network. They passed out gifts to neighborhood children and shared homemade cookies with families there.

We were disappointed at the withdrawal of a pastoral candidate for Fellowship Bible Church, our church plant. We continue to pray and seek God's direction for the future of FBC.

Dr. Bob Wilkin of Grace Evangelical Society taught a November conference at CBC entitled "Doubt and the New Calvinism: The Current Crisis in Assurance." He explored such questions as the believer's assurance of salvation; works and election; the role of feelings in assurance, and our motivations for serving God.

Sharon Berg, Correspondent

EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Marion, S.D.

Randy Maass, Pastor

As we entered this winter season, we prepared our hearts to celebrate God's coming. We were encouraged to grab a blanket and attend the Living Nativity in Marion. For many years this was a project of our congregation, but now has been taken over by a church in Marion.

Our local churches were challenged to bring dry food items, which our local ministerial gathered and distributed with a turkey to the less fortunate in our community for Thanksgiving.

We were saddened to hear of the death of **Charlene Classen Burkholder**. Her parents, Curt and Lena, were pastor and wife during the 1950s. We have many good memories of her growing-up years. We also were saddened to say goodbye to our dear sister **Martha Becker** on Nov. 10. She would have celebrated her 103rd birthday on Dec. 27! We were able to use our hospice skills for her during her final days.

A work trip to Lives Under Construction Ranch, a boys ranch in Lampe Mo., is planned in the very near future.

Lois Regher, Correspondent

EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Dallas, Ore.

Jerry, Franz, Pastor

Our Missions Committee hosted another very successful Missions Conference in October. This year we decided to focus on our local ministries, several of which our church supports and many new ones that some in our congregation may have been unaware of. We began by showing the movie "Transformation." It was very interesting to see areas of such depravation turn completely around. Following the movie we asked several men to step forward and pray for our local, county, state, and national ministries.

We also invited all the local ministries to display information for those attending to browse and talk with each representative. We also heard from two very good speakers from local ministries, one from the Union Gospel Mission (providing food and shelter for the homeless) and the other from a transition house for those just getting out of prison.

We were delighted to have **Bill McLeod**, Executive Director and Founder of *Mission ConneXion*, as our guest. This organization connects local churches and individuals to missions so that increasing numbers of believers are actively serving in areas of the world's greatest need and opportunity. *Mission ConneXion* hosts a large conference each year that we strive to send as many from our church as possible. We also heard from representatives that work with international students at a local college, and someone from the *James 2 Kitchen*, a group serving meals to those in need in our community.

The missions conference was a very successful means of connecting our congregation to the organizations in our community that are serving our local residents in need, encouraging everyone to get involved.

Our Healthcare Committee hosted a workshop for families struggling with Alzheimer's and dementia. The speaker provided current information and answered many questions, such as what to look for, how to help each other and what resources are available. This workshop was very well attended; in fact, double what the expectancy was. Many families are dealing with the heartache of this prevalent illness.

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child: This year, in an attempt to get everyone involved, we held a one-day gift box packing event! Several items were purchased or donated to send to the kids. During our Sunday fellowship time, we lined the tables with these items. Everyone in the congregation got involved in packing a box for a child to receive in another country. What an awesome privilege to help in this way, to be a bright light to these children, to gift them and to pray for them.

Our annual Harvest Meal was a great way to encourage our family and friends to join us for fellowship and delicious food. A lot of preparation (we cooked 14 turkeys!), workers and fun! Every year our attendance increases, showing God's love to our community.

We were pleased to welcome two new members to our congregation.

Vicki Kibbey, Correspondent

STUARTBURN GOSPEL CHAPEL

Stuartburn, Man.

Mark Funk, Pastor

The Awana program continues to enjoy a large attendance from the church and the community; the youth are engaged in weekly Bible study, games and community outreach, and the Women's Ministries held another very successful Mother/Daughter Advent Tea.

Not to be outdone, the men also have an ongoing project. They decided to shave their heads in preparation for a hair-growing challenge. Some who have had cherished beards for many years have even sacrificed their facial hair in return for pledges.



All money received will go to Union Gospel Mission's Faith Academy in Winnipeg. Only \$50 a month provides an education for an inner city child that includes the importance of knowing Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. We already have enough funds raised to support more

than one child for a year. The event will end on April 1, at which time our shaggy men can cut, trim, and shave as they desire.

The Christmas season is always an exciting time in the church. The children energetically prepared their program entitled "All I Want for Christmas - Jesus." Our annual Christmas banquet was also a highlight of December.

Sue Hoy, Correspondent

FAITH EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Henderson, Neb.

Michael Fink, Pastor

Dan and Carrie Ritzman (REACH) shared about their ministry in Belgium on Oct. 26. Dan also gave the morning worship message "When Jesus Challenges our Needs." We learned about the work of Grace Mission in both Haiti and Mexico on Dec. 7. **Eugene Enns**, along with missionaries from both fields, shared about their ministry during the Sunday school hour as well as the worship service.

Our church opened to the community for a special "Christmas Tour of Homes" on Nov. 29. More than 100 people came to see our Christmas display, including a variety of crèches brought in by church family. Guests received a brochure with basic church information and a Christmas tract that shared the Gospel along with a candy cane.

Alice Decker, Correspondent

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FOCUS on our CHURCHES

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EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Lustre, Mont.

John Skillman, Pastor

Darrin Clinton, director of the Glendive Creation Dinosaur and Fossil Museum, spoke at our Harvest Festival, Oct. 5-7. Mr. Clinton gave us a deep appreciation for the foundation that Genesis gives for our faith and life in this world. He gave very good evidence that God created the world in six literal days. **Pastor Ben and Sharon MacConnell** of Paradise Valley Church of Natoma, Kan., also presented their work and provided special music during the services.

This was the year for our Women's Ministries Mission Sale. We enjoyed fun and food with an auction on Nov. 3, and successfully funded much of our women's ministries missionary commitments.



Our Nov. 16 service included the presentation and dedication of approximately 100 shoeboxes that our people put together for Samaritan's Purse Christmas Child Project. Then on Nov. 23, we gathered for our

Thanksgiving testimony service that was filled with voices lifting up praise for His goodness in the last year.

Sharon Skillman, Correspondent

LANGHAM EVANGELICAL BIBLE CHURCH

Langham, Sask.

Greg Guarnett, Senior Pastor

Our growing town has brought with it elevated enrollment in Cubbies and Sparks, pushing us to lean even more on Christ for strength and wisdom! We are thankful for volunteers who have stepped out of their comfort zone to help in children's clubs this fall.

Our congregational care committee did a "Big Cook" to prepare frozen meals for others to benefit. As a church body we served alongside others in our community to serve a record attendance at the Langham Fowl Supper.

We were thankful to pray over and deliver 54 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes this year. It was encouraging to see children's club parents getting involved in this ministry too.

Associate Pastor Justin Epp was pleased to facilitate a webinar, hosted by our church, to help parents navigate technology and "screen time." **Pastor Lee Young** from **Salem Church** was the presenter.

Please pray for our upcoming Annual General Meeting, that volunteers will choose to serve the Lord for His glory in the coming year!

Marilyn Friesen, Correspondent

DALMENY BIBLE CHURCH

Dalmeny, Sask.

Dennis Friesen, Pastor

We welcome **Slavo and Zuzana Kutaš** and their children, Benjamin and Rachel, to our congregation. Slavo has been hired as our Associate Pastor of Worship/Mercy Ministry.

Twenty two senior high youth plus leaders spent the weekend at Ranger Lake Bible Camp for their retreat in early October. **Doug Barr** of Ranger Lake Bible Camp was their speaker. The youth also "enjoyed" tearing down a garage for one of our members as a good example of "loving one another."

We're so thankful for all the leaders and many children that come out weekly to our Club Program. Lately they've had some fun events such as a spa night, scrapbooking night, soccer tournament with dads, movie night and snack-making with parents.

Missions Focuses: The **Rev. Samuel Entenza**, a Cuban pastor, shared at a Saturday morning breakfast; **Scott and Patsy Buhler (TEACH)** presented their ministry with Camp Quest in Brazil; and Carol Wilbert shared of her work also at Camp Quest.

We collected 72 shoeboxes for Samaritan's Christmas Child Operation. Our goal was 70.

Women's Ministries held their annual Craft and Bake Sale to raise money for Global Partners that we support. We were all encouraged by our speaker, **Patsy Buhler**, and **Doreen Benson** who ministered in music.

Our congregation has been challenged in our worship services with a message series called "Loving Your Church."

Marilyn Harder, Correspondent

GRUNTHAL EVANGELICAL MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH

Grunthal, Man.

FEBC President Blaine Donaldson met with the church membership on Oct. 24 and shared some helpful information on the roles of deacons and elders within the church. Blaine also met with the elders themselves and then on Sunday he brought the morning message and led the communion service. We appreciated the time he took to minister to us.

Our women's ministry group hosted the fall kickoff on Oct. 6. Since then, two ladies Bible study groups have been meeting. The ladies also got together on Nov. 18 to bake and decorate cookies for "Caring Hands" and families in need in the community.

Our Sunday school classes put together more than 80 shoe boxes for "Samaritan's Purse" this November.

Continue to pray for the church and elder board as we look for a new pastor. Pray for God's guidance in the decisions that will need to be made.

Marilyn D. Thiessen, Correspondent

HEARTLAND BIBLE CHURCH

Lincoln, Neb.

Scott Hecht, Pastor

Mike Gendron of Proclaiming the Gospel Ministries shared the message “Evangelicals and Catholics: Reversing the Reformation,” in November, focusing on current trends that seem to be ignoring the dangers discussed in Galatians 1:6-7.

Neighbors around the church were invited to share an evening on the church lawn in October, where we enjoyed hot dogs with all the trimmings. Pastor Scott gave a clear Gospel presentation.

Baby bottles appeared on our resource table. These were ours to take home to fill with money for the Lincoln Pregnancy Center, which cares for hundreds of women with pregnancy-related concerns as they share the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The women began a very helpful eight-week Bible study in October entitled “The Invisible War,” by Chip Ingram. They learned how to do battle with the enemy and win by putting on God’s armor.

Missions Movie Night in November took us to West Africa to view the DVD “I Once Was Blind.” These lands are broken and bloodied by years of civil war, desperate poverty and dark religion. The Gospel is changing all that.

Trudy Reimer, Correspondent

JANSEN BIBLE CHURCH

Jansen, Neb.

Paul Carpenter, Pastor

FEBC President Blaine Donaldson presented us with the challenge of sharing the hope of the Gospel, every believer at every opportunity, at our Oct 5 service.

The Fall Harvest/Missions Festival in October featured **Vic and Gwen Flaming** (*International Training Partners*); **Waldo and Lynette Goossen** (*Africa Inland Mission*); **Dennis and Cindy Wiens** (*SAT 7*); and **Ray and Dulcie Milton** (*New Tribes Mission*). Several of our missionaries also sent video briefs of their work.

We served 120 meals at Awana Family Night on Oct. 15. Most parents stayed the entire evening. Our Awana Club, as well as the church family, participated in a drive to stock the local food pantry’s shelves before Thanksgiving Day.

The Christmas season included our Ladies Christmas Salad Supper and gift exchange and the New Year’s Eve potluck, followed by games and fellowship.

Tena Dick, Correspondent

Cornerstoners Share Worship Music with Fellowship Churches

A group from Cornerstone Bible Church of Steinbach, Man., has recorded a worship album of hymns to share with Fellowship churches. “We would like to share it with all our sister churches in the FEBC and to bless them with free downloads,” said Chad Wiebe, a Cornerstone elder and one of the album’s singers.

Visit <https://soundcloud.com/cornerstoners> to listen to and download the album.

KENORA BIBLE CHURCH

Kenora, Ont.

Allan Dueck, Senior Pastor

Yes, we are alive and well here in Kenora, even though *Fellowship Focus* readers have not heard from us in a long while.

We had an exciting summer as we welcomed our **Associate Pastor Eric Sinclair**, his wife Michelle and their children, Matthew and Amy, into our ministry here. Some may know Eric and Michelle from the Tribal Trails ministry. Their family has been a blessing to our fellowship. Eric works mostly with the youth and young adults. Eric and Senior Pastor Allan Dueck also share the preaching.

Summer was also filled with weddings and a Vacation Bible School. Then it was on to fall and some new beginnings:

- We are experiencing new challenges with new and younger youth at our Youth Group, because most of the others have gone off to college in the last couple of years
- Pioneer Club was started this fall for the younger children and is being enjoyed by a number of children.
- Tuesday is floor hockey night for all ages. Some of us are sideline sitters, but cheer on the others.
- A number of our men meet weekly to study and pray, as do some of the women.

We have a very active prayer chain, and we praise the Lord as He sees us through thick and thin.

We have our challenges spiritually, physically and monetarily. But with God all things are possible, and we are holding fast to that promise.

Wendy Paton, Correspondent

VITA BIBLE CHURCH

Vita, Man.

We were blessed to hear from **Arley and Janice Loewen** in November, as they just returned from the mission field in Afghanistan. While there, they taught Muslims in universities and churches. It was such an encouragement to hear all that God has done and is still doing in Afghanistan.

Vita Bible Church has enjoyed several wonderful guest speakers this fall, including **Rick Penner**, **Steve Taylor**, and **Jared Fast**. It was a pleasure to hear what God had laid on each of their hearts to share with us. Rick shared a message of hope from Romans 5:1-5 in his sermon, “Do You Have Hope in a Trying World?” Steve discussed how we need to get our focus off of ourselves and on to God to have a victorious life in Christ. Jared used Acts chapters 1, 2, and 4 to in his sermon “Rebuilding the Church.”

Tiffany Tuurenhout, Correspondent

FOCUS on our CHURCHES

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SALEM CHURCH

Waldheim, Sask.

Darrell Derksen, Senior Pastor

It was such a joy to have one of our global partners, **Mike and Rose Hack**, home for an extended visit for several months. Formal and informal interactions provided strong mutual encouragement. The Hacks hosted a celebration evening called “Unsung Heroes,” with stories about some of the amazing heroes that God has sent to AIDSLink. We have a renewed appreciation for the breadth of their ministry.

Pietro and Nichole Cara presented their vision for ministry in Italy in December. We are partnering with MSC Canada in sending and supporting them. They are uniquely suited for ministry in Italy and are working toward starting in March. Their acreage is sold, Pietro has ended his career in insurance, and today they are busy discovering their support team. Our FEBC churches continue to be passionate

about supporting people who are called to serve around the world. We at Salem would recommend that you consider becoming part of Pietro and Nichole’s support team.

Several times over the past five years we have gathered in the old sanctuary, which is currently serving us as a multipurpose room, for an “old time” music night, thinking this may be the last one. Each of these nights, while creating a set of new special memories, also served to draw out memories of the past when that part of our building served as our sanctuary and was situated out in the countryside. Our gathering in November may very well have been the last, as spring ground breaking for our building expansion is anticipated.

This year’s Sunday school theme is FBI: Faithful Bible Investigators. There are a host of investigators being trained each week. On many Sunday mornings the children are searching across the stage to see if one of the investigative tools is hidden on it. The candy reward makes all the searching worthwhile.

Video Library

Is the Bible Reliable?

Many Christians are failing to keep their faith after they begin college or enter the workforce. Focus on the Family’s *TrueU* curriculum offers an introduction to apologetics (a defense of belief in God) that aims to help reverse this trend. *TrueU* is a valuable resource for youth groups, college campus clubs, Sunday school classes, home-based small groups, homeschools, and individuals who want to strengthen their faith. Visit www.trueu.org to learn more about the curriculum.

This second set in the life-changing DVD series asks, “Is the Bible reliable?” Proven facts and insights from philosophy, cosmology and biology will help you engage intellectually with professors and peers, both in and outside of the classroom. For centuries, intellectuals and critics alike have questioned inconsistencies. Dr. Meyer examines ancient texts and archeological evidence to build a

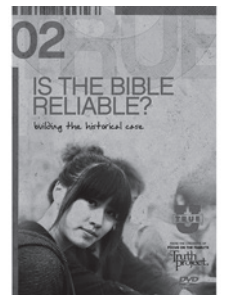
compelling case for the accuracy of Scripture — and why the Bible is trustworthy.

This DVD series contains a leader’s guide and several promotional resources (included on DVD 1) that can be printed and used by churches and small groups. To access the files you must have a DVD ROM drive on your computer.

Audience: High school juniors and seniors, college students and adults.

Ten 30-minute sessions. Available on loan from the FEBC video library. Contact info@febcministries.org to reserve this.

For other studies on loan, visit www.fellowshipforward.org/video-lending-library.html.



The Fellowship exists to provide a framework which enables member churches to stimulate and encourage each other to be more effective in building the Church of Jesus Christ through interaction, joint service projects, mutual assistance, accountability and fellowship.



Births/Adoptions

Community Bible Church, Omaha, Neb.

- ☛ Abel Gilbert Keith to Keith and Kara Chase, Nov. 15
- ☛ Seamus Curtis to Kory and Dallas Beams, Nov. 29; grandparents are Jett and Kris Curtis

Cornerstone Bible Church, Steinbach, Man.

- ☛ Diana Margaret to Jonathan and Stephanie Coutts, Oct. 30
- ☛ Haddon Jeremiah to Eric and Kara Honsberger, Dec. 2

Crosspoint Bible Church, Omaha, Neb.

- ☛ Sawyer Trenton to Tim and Kendra Eveland, Oct. 1
- ☛ Tegan Beverly to Ryan and Mary Cohagan, Nov. 25

Evangelical Bible Church, Dallas, Ore.

- ☛ Paisley Marie to Taylor and Allison Brown, Oct. 7

Faith Evangelical Bible Church, Henderson, Neb.

- ☛ Adelaide Joy to Rick and Alyssa Bartek, Oct. 13
- ☛ Brooklyn Mae to Randy and Allison Bauer, Oct. 21
- ☛ Brock Taylor to Taylor and Jessica Siebert, Oct. 22; grandparents are Lowell and Shannon Siebert

Grace Evangelical Bible Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

- ☛ Fynnley Ryan to Pastor Ryan and Heather Peixoto, Oct. 23
- ☛ Milos Teseo to Fernando Portillo and Angelika Ratzlaff, Nov. 3

Grunthal Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, Grunthal, Man.

- ☛ Judah Tyler to Tyler and Alishia Froese, Nov. 17; grandparents are Vern and Hilda Froese

Salem Church, Waldheim, Sask.

- ☛ Kolby John to John and Karissa Cuvala, Nov. 19; grandparents are Ken and Annette Neufeld



Marriages

Grunthal Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, Grunthal, Man.

- ☺ Kendra, daughter of Ron and Eunice Wiebe, to Max Galaguz, on Nov. 1

Deaths

Cornerstone Bible Church, Steinbach, Man.

- † Arlie Reimer (89), Oct. 8

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Loyal has served on the elder board of the Faith Evangelical Bible Church for nine years and on the missions committee for 18 years. He also served for many years on the FEBC Commission on Church Planting.

Two of Donna's and Loyal's children have been FEBC missionaries in Niger: Steve and Mikki are still there, while Mike

and LaRae have returned to the States to lead the Cross-cultural Ministries Department at Grace University (Omaha).

Donna's funeral was held at Faith Evangelical Bible Church in Henderson on Dec. 6. ■

Catch the Vision

Sowing seeds at 30,000 feet *By Arielle Berg*



Last year I planned a trip to visit relatives in Seattle. I was in my first year of teaching middle school, and the trip was a short, but much-needed break and change of scenery in the normal routine of the school year.

I knew that on a trek across U.S. skies God would undoubtedly provide several opportunities to converse with fellow travelers. On the flight from Denver to Seattle, I sat next to a middle-aged businessman whom I will call "Jim." I learned that Jim regularly made trips from Omaha to the West Coast in his position as a high-ranking manager within an information technology company.

To be honest, I felt rather intimidated striking up a conversation at first. I am not naturally an evangelist and must intentionally turn conversations to faith and to Christ. I felt like a meek Midwestern school teacher next to a corporation giant, but Jim proved to be very friendly, and said that I reminded him of one of his children. We traded stories about life at home, families, and the stark differences between the Midwest and the West Coast. As we discussed the flight, I remarked that flying takes a lot of trust in the pilot, using my statement to transition into a discussion about spiritual life.

Jim began to express his opinions about faith. He referred to his brother, a priest with whom he had agreed to disagree. He loved his brother, he said, but the subject of faith was something they disagreed too strongly on. All religions had their own good ways to get to God, Jim said.

Knowing that many business people tend towards intellectualism, I shared how my faith had been strengthened by the worldview and apologetics courses I had taken at the Christian schools I attended. I had come to see that not only was my faith real, but that it made sense, standing up when all other worldviews crumbled.

Although my fellow passenger was open to discussion, I could tell that he was using the cheerful confidence he had in himself as a kind of guard or barrier against really examining Christianity. He'd had this talk with Christians before and was prepared to politely disagree.

Toward the end of our conversation, I asked Jim why he wouldn't want to be sure of where he would spend eternity. He responded that while he appreciated my concern, he was just fine with where he was spiritually.

As our flight approached Seattle, I could tell that Jim had enjoyed our conversation, and that I had at least won his respect by simply sharing my faith without pushing. It gave me a fresh realization that my attitude and tone are important aids to the message I have to share.

Even as we went our separate ways in the terminal, Jim waved goodbye to me.

All religions had their own good ways to get to God, said my fellow passenger.

Along with discovering from this encounter that an outward appearance of confidence may be used as a smokescreen, I was also reminded that we may not see that the Holy Spirit is working in a heart, even after we are long gone. I first learned that while traveling in Asia with a team of university students. I had the opportunity to share my testimony of God's work in my life with an Asian friend. At that time, I couldn't see that my story had made any impression on her. It was not until a year later that one of my teammates contacted me, sharing that my Asian friend had asked her about Jesus over Skype.

I had planted the seed. My former teammate had watered it. I hadn't seen any evidence of conviction or change right away. I had no idea that my story had impacted her and that she would respond later.

But whether sharing in Asia or at 30,000 feet over the United States, my responsibility is to share and to pray for the Holy Spirit to do His work, in His way and His time.

Arielle Berg grew up at Community Bible Church of Omaha. ■