



NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST
HERITAGE COMMISSION

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1994

GROW
WITNESS
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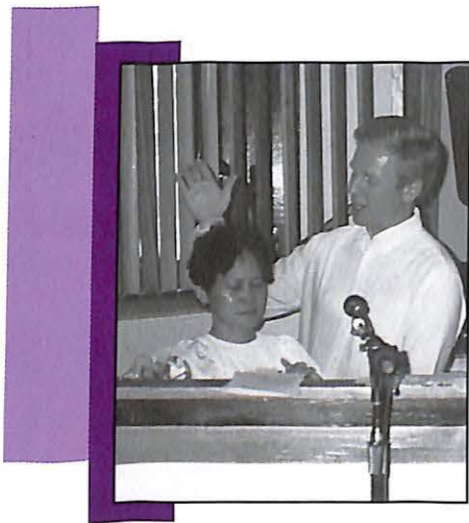
THE BAPTIST HERALD

North American Baptist Conference



A condensation of the "Statement of Beliefs"
of the North American Baptist Conference

When we become Christians, we are born into God's family. When we join a local church, we become part of that family. If that local church has chosen to be a part of the North American Baptist Conference, we automatically become a part of that larger family. Our common experience with Jesus Christ and common commitment to His mission in the world holds us together as a Conference family today.



■ We believe the Bible is God's Word given by divine inspiration, the record of God's revelation of Himself to humanity. It is trustworthy, sufficient, without error—the supreme authority and guide for all doctrine and conduct. It is the truth by which God brings people into a saving relationship with Himself and leads them to Christian maturity.

■ We believe in the one living and true God, perfect in wisdom, sovereignty, holiness, justice, mercy, and love. He exists eternally in three co-equal persons who act together in creation, providence, and redemption.

■ We believe God created an order of spiritual beings called angels to serve Him and do His will. We believe God created man in His own image to have fellowship with Himself and to be stewards over His creation. As a result, each person is unique, possesses dignity, and is worthy of respect. Through the temptation of Satan, Adam chose to disobey God; this brought sin and death to the

human race and suffering to all creation. Therefore, everyone is born with a sinful nature and needs to be reconciled to God. Satan tempts people to rebel against God, even those who love Him. Nonetheless, everyone is personally responsible to God for thoughts, actions, and beliefs and has the right to approach Him directly through Jesus Christ, the only mediator.

■ We believe salvation is redemption by Christ of the whole person from sin and death. It is offered as a free gift by God to all and must be received personally through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

■ We believe the Church is the body of which Christ is the head and all who believe in Him are members. Christians are commanded to be baptized upon profession of faith and to unite with a local church for mutual encouragement and growth in discipleship through

worship, nurture, service, and the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. Each church is a self-governing body with a congregational form of government under the Lordship of Christ with all members sharing responsibility. Its ordinances are baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper.

■ We believe religious liberty, rooted in Scripture, is the inalienable right of all individuals to freedom of conscience with ultimate accountability to God. Church and state exist by the will of God. Each has distinctive concerns and responsibilities, free from control by the other.

■ We believe Christians, individually and collectively, are salt and light in society. We affirm the family as the basic unit of society and seek to preserve its integrity and stability.

■ We believe God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring all things to their appropriate end and establish the new heaven and the new earth. The certain hope of the Christian is that Jesus will return to the earth suddenly, personally, and visibly in glory according to His promise. The dead will be raised, and Christ will judge mankind in righteousness. □

The complete "Statement of Beliefs" and a study guide are available from the North American Baptist Conference International Office.



by John Binder

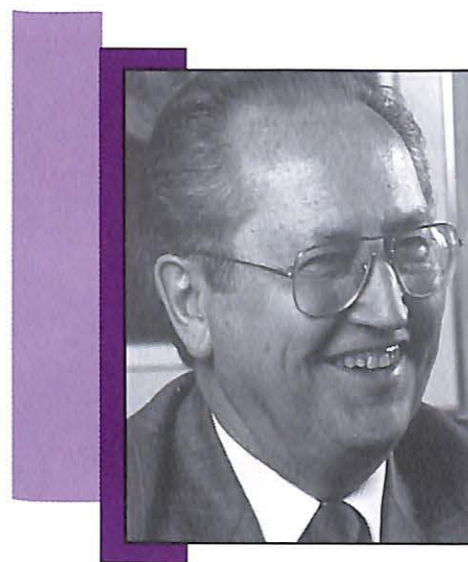
We live in a world where many people are hurting. This is true in rich countries such as the United States and Canada as well as in poor third world areas such as Africa, India, and China. People everywhere are confused, lost, and searching.

In fact, today the world is truly a more dangerous, chaotic, broken place than ever before. After the cold war ended and communism collapsed, we celebrated. But this ended quickly as restraints were lifted and the ethnic conflict reared its ugly head. It was time to get even.

But this is a world that needs to be penetrated by the gospel message of reconciliation and love. Jesus makes a staggering claim upon us as His followers to love one another. He said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (*John 13:34-35 NIV*).

The lost and needy are our responsibility. If someone comes to you or me for help, Christ wants to touch that need through you or me. Too often we ignore the call for help. Often we are preoccupied with programs and activities and neglect the personal caring for people. God may have to bring difficult experiences into our lives to help us become compassionate and caring.

Jesus not only commanded us to



Let us dedicate ourselves to a new or renewed vision of the power of God to transform lives. May we also discover a clarity of vision that transcends our human concerns for our world. Let us also be encouraged by Christ's promise that He will provide His own divine power and strength to us as we follow His example. □

John Binder is executive director of the North American Baptist Conference, 1979-1994

care, but He also gave us Himself as the best model of caring. As He viewed the world of His day, He was "moved with compassion." Jesus left His comfort zone (heaven) and made Himself vulnerable to the pain, weakness, poverty, sorrow, suffering, and temptations of people in all levels of society. He became known as a "friend of sinners." He touched the untouchables and shrank from no one. He offered care, friendship, and love to all people.

Jesus gave us the church which is to be a caring community in which we are enabled to grow in caring for others in the church as well as outside the church. This caring needs to be cultivated within the body of Christ so it can become a natural reality outside of the church.

Vision 2000 resource materials on the subject of "Care" have been developed by Dr. Ron Mayforth and Mrs. Dorothy Ganoung, produced by the Development Department, and sent to all pastors. They are packed full of ideas to be utilized in every local church. We encourage each church to consider appointing a planning committee on Care to make good use of this issue of the **Baptist Herald** and the resource materials.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF CARING

"The Bible starts with caring and ends with caring. It is the story of a God who gives and forgives and gives again . . . a story of God's unending love for us."

by Hugh Litchfield

The Bible starts with caring and ends with caring. In the beginning, out of love for us, God created the heavens and the earth. In the end, out of love, God provides an eternal kingdom for believers.

Between the beginning and the end is the story of a God who gives and forgives and gives again. It is a story of a God who would not give up on humankind. Instead, in the face of rejection and rebellion, God's love and mercy would come to give another chance at the kingdom. The story of God is a story of unending love for us.

In the Bible, there are so many verses about love. But at the risk of being labeled simplistic, I limit our discussion to two verses that I feel capture the essence of the biblical basis of caring. One is 1 John 4:16: "So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (RSV). The other is John 13:34-45: "A new commandment I give to you, that

you love one another; even as

I have loved you, that you may also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (RSV). In these verses are captured two major ideas about the biblical basis of caring.

God Loves Us

Do we "believe the love God has for us?" We remember the story. God created humankind and gave them everything they needed for the good life. However, they didn't trust God, but felt that what they wanted was more important than what God wanted. They rebelled, and sin came into the world with all the pain and misery that went along with it. Adam and Eve knew they had done wrong, and they hid

from God. After that, they developed elaborate rituals and sacrifices to try to get on the "right side" of God. But they never seemed to work.

Finally, God acted in the person of Christ. When Christ died on the cross for the sins of the world, the heart of God was laid bare for all to see. And what was seen was love. No matter what they had done or been, God still loved them and was willing to open the doors of the kingdom for them.

It is still true now. Whatever we've been, whatever we've done, we can still know this. God loves us and that will never stop. We can trust our lives on that.

I read a story of an orphanage run by a man by the name of Father Jim, a very caring person.



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Everyone who came to that orphanage always had one negative characteristic about his life. Father Jim had a way of taking it and turning it into a positive factor. One boy came with very terrible hair, and he made that something to praise, so everybody began to want to have hair like that boy did. Another boy had big feet, always falling over himself, and he made a lot to do over those feet, praising him for his fine, developed feet.

One day they brought a new boy to the orphanage who had a terrible birthmark on his face. The scar covered half of his face. It wasn't pretty to look upon. All the kids wondered what Father Jim would

"From start to finish, the message of the Bible is that God loves us deeply. Once we accept that love, it reaches out to others."

say to the boy when he came. How would he deal with this? The boy had a disposition to match that birthmark. He was unruly, hard to get along with, rebellious, because all the way through his life he had been teased and ridiculed and not accepted because of that terrible mark on his face.

Father Jim drove up in his old broken-down station wagon. All the kids ran to greet him. This one boy stayed away on the other side, away from everybody. Father Jim saw him and said, "Well, who is this?"

They told him, "It's the new boy." They grew silent as they waited to see what Father Jim would do.

He went over, looked at the boy, picked him up, and held him in the air, and said, "Who do we have here?" He held him close and kissed that birthmark right in the middle.

All the kids knew that Father Jim had accepted that boy and that they could accept him, too. The boy became a model child because he had learned for the first time in his life that somebody loved him for what he was, not what he wasn't.

God is like that—comes and "kisses" us and lets us know that we are loved.

We Must Love Others

The Gospel of John states it simply. People will know we are disciples of Christ if we "love one another." As Christ has loved us, we are to love one another.

And how did Jesus love? In very practical ways: Feeding the hungry, forgiving the condemned, reaching out to the forsaken, being a friend to the sinner, healing the sick. When Jesus talked about judgment, he talked about it in terms of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, giving a cup of cold water to the thirsty, visiting the prisoner, taking the stranger in (see *Matthew 25:31ff*). Simple acts, but acts that show one has been overcome by the love of God.

So here is the truth. Love is a deed. When we accept the love that God has for us, it then spills out to others as we seek to do good to them. The proof that we are the disciples of Christ comes as we love one another. The deeds we do testify to the love we have.

From the war comes the story of a young man who was wounded.

The Chaplain went to see him. He could easily tell that the man's wound was going to be fatal—that he did not have long.

He said, "May I read to you from the Bible?"

The young man said, "I'm cold," so the Chaplain took off his trench coat and carefully put it around the him. "Now can I read to you from the Bible?"

The young man said, "I am thirsty," so the Chaplain put down the Bible and got out his canteen and carefully gave him something to drink. Then he said, "Can I read to you from the Bible?"

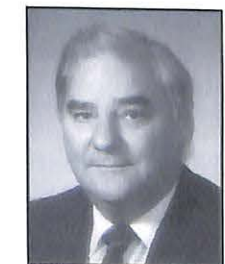
He said, "My legs are hurting," so the Chaplain put the Bible down again and carefully straightened out those crooked legs, made sure that the trench coat was tucked around him again, and said, "Now can I read to you from the Bible?"

The soldier said, "If there is anything in that Bible that can cause you to do what you've done for me, yes. Please read to me from that book."

The deeds testify to the love of Christ found in The Book.

As I see it, this is the biblical basis for caring. From start to finish, the message of the Bible is that God loves us deeply. Once we accept that love, it reaches out to others. We just can't help it. Isn't that the way of love? □

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BECAUSE YOU CARE ENOUGH TO PRAY

Call for consistent prayer ministry focused specifically on spiritual awakening and world evangelization

We Prayed—God Moved

“We need your prayers for our congregation and our church planting ministry in Mexico City,” says Missionary Juan Luna serving in Mexico City. The results of prayer are seen as Missionary Luna baptized three people in 1992, the first year of his ministry there; in 1993, he baptized 22 persons, and the church welcomed 10 more people into its membership by testimony.

“Many of you pray for our missions work in Mexico City,” Luna relates. “For us, January was a month for prayer and preparation for our ministry in 1994. As we prayed, God started to move among us in a very special way. From the beginning, newcomers came to the church services. In February, we held special prayer events that prepared the way for March with outstanding answers to prayer. Volunteers from Canada, with prayer support, helped us present the JESUS film in the streets. More than 100 persons made decisions for Christ. We now work in three different places to disciple these new Christians and engage them in Bible studies. On Easter Sunday, we baptized three new members. One used to be a drug addict and sold drugs in the area, but Jesus Christ has changed him. He is a new person, praise God! Thanks for your prayers.”

Prayers Answered—People Respond to God

A missionary in Japan for more than 40 years, Rollie Reasoner, says, “Success or failure in ministry as a missionary is far more dependent on the missionary’s prayer life than it is on technical aspects. People you work with fall by the wayside in spite of your best efforts. Let’s not kid ourselves. We are in a war!”

Planting a church in Japan continues to be a war, because we are calling people, many of whom have absolutely no background in Bible truth or church life, to commit themselves to Jesus Christ as their only Lord and Savior. Many Japanese would be happy to add Jesus Christ to their Shintoism, Buddhism, or any number of new religions, which have roots in those two major religions. But when we claim that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation, we are accused of being very narrow-minded. Our mutual, concerted prayer continues to be the key to success in church planting in Japan.

Have there been visible results at Kongo Bible Church, a new church planting ministry? Three of the core people, who had committed their lives to Christ under the leadership and ministry of Pastor Masaaki Higashi, decided to follow the Lord in baptism. There has been continued spiritual growth in the lives of the five core members!

The Lord brought 19 people to the conversational English classes, which we teach at the church and in our home. . . an open door to evangelism.

One of those students, a woman, now attends Bible studies and worship services regularly. A friend of hers who studies with Missionaries Bill and Luci Lengefeld in Tsu referred her to our church. She wanted to study English. She joined my wife Sharon’s morning ladies’ class. She wanted to know more about the Christian God, because she had read some novels by a Christian author and had become convinced that the Buddhist gods were not real. I gave her a book that introduced her to the basics of Christianity.

“Thank you very much for your valuable book . . . about the Bible. Though there are many things that I can’t understand, there is one thing that I can understand. . . the most important thing is to believe in God. I am going to read the Bible,” she responded.

That is a miracle! Her husband then read the book and said, “Maybe we should think about going to church.” That is also a miracle! Our prayers are being answered as the Lord leads this couple to Himself.

Another man in his sixties now attends the worship services at Kongo Bible Church. I met him last spring on my regular morning walks. We have become friends. He and Sharon share collecting stamps as a hobby. We found out that he has a

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Christian aunt who lives at Bethany House, a home for elderly people run by our Baptist church, Tsu Toyogaoka Christian Church.

Are all of these things just chance? No way! Prayer has brought this man under the hearing of the gospel!

The spiritual battle goes on, but we know that the Lord is continuing to lead people to Himself because of our mutual concerted prayer. He continues to grow Kongo Bible Church and many other church planting churches in North America, Cameroon, Nigeria, Brazil, the Philippines, Russia, Bulgaria, and Mexico. Praise be to Him! —Doug Woyke, field secretary for the N.A.B. Conference mission work in Japan and church planter at Kongo Bible Church in Japan

Prayer Brings Healing

Reflecting on her past year, which included recovery from a fractured left ankle, nearly losing her life from a combination of asthma, pneumonia, and empyema, and then another fall and a fracture of the knee, Missionary doctor, Helen Marie Schmidt, says, “Some people have said Satan wants to keep me down. I’m sure that is true, but he is being defeated. People all over Cameroon, USA, Canada, and other places have consistently prayed for me. For two months when visitors were not allowed, our Kumba Baptist Church pastor and officers met in the hallway of Bansa Baptist Hospital in Cameroon and prayed. Families prayed together for me; individuals and churches prayed.”

“Every improvement brought praise to God. I continually receive letters and cards praising God for my life. That is the purpose of our lives, bringing praise to God,” reflects Helen Marie.

“One Seminary student wrote that my treatment of his sick brother and comforting words touched him in 1986. This encouraged him not only to become a Christian but also to go to Seminary in order to bring others to Christ. His letter was my first knowledge of this result of my life work in the hospital. Keep praying!”

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CARING

through Planting New Churches

To plant new churches globally through the work of missionaries and church planters and provide ongoing support to new churches

"Jesus loves the Church. We know that because He gave His life for it. You love the Church, too. I know that because I see your responses to our existing churches and church plants," says Jim Fann, church planting director for North America. Since a renewed emphasis on church planting started in 1952, "we've been busy planting churches. . . 220. Of those 220, 146 have survived, making up 38 percent of our existing congregations and 32 percent of our existing constituent membership.

"When we realize that on Sunday morning only 30 percent of the North American population is found in any kind of church at all and that there are 100 million lost people in Canada and the U.S.A., that makes us one of the largest mission fields in the world. Eighty percent of those people will never be reached by existing congregations, because some of those congregations are not in touch with the needs of various ethnic groups, baby-boomers, or baby-busters. . . they have different lifestyles, different expectations, different schedules. If every evangelical church in Canada averaged 2,000 in attendance, 7,000 additional churches would be needed to reach Canada's 28 million inhabitants. Since 1900, there's been a nearly 50 percent decline in the number of churches per 10,000 population. So we need new-vital, growing, reproducing, Christ-centered, evangelistic, local churches in North America. . . and we are looking for established churches with the vision to parent new churches. We exist to multiply healthy, reproducing North American Baptist Conference churches." Presently, the Church Planting Department supports approximately 30 churches. Plans are to plant a maximum of eight new churches in 1994.

New churches introduce people to Christ, resulting in a vibrant witness for Christ and changed lives. The story of several of these and their caring concern is told on these pages.

Coming to Faith through a Friend's Caring

At Country Hills Community Church, we encourage our people to follow Paul's example of "becoming all things to all people so that some might be saved" (1 Corinthians 9). In the last year, we've found that becoming one thing has proven most effective in our evangelism efforts: becoming friends. All those who have become Christ's followers through this ministry were introduced to the gospel after a sincere friendship was established with a believer. Katie is one example.

A woman from Country Hills befriended Katie. Although exposed to the gospel and attending services, she remained unresponsive to Christ. Instead of giving up or moving on, the Christian friend continued to invest in the relationship. Finally, after being friends with an interested believer for 19 months, Katie made the decision to commit her life to Christ.

In looking back over her process of coming to faith, Katie credits the sincerity of the friendship with keeping her interested. "If I would have been pushed, the friendship would have been over. But now I'm following Christ and trying to influence my husband."

We believe evangelism will be most effective when Christians establish relationships of integrity with the unchurched around them. We must never forget that lost people matter to God. -Bryan Hochhalter, church planter, Country Hills Community Church, Calgary, Alberta



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Caring by Making Our Community Better

"Cascade Baptist Fellowship exists to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to the unchurched in the Federal Way area and to facilitate their growth in Jesus Christ through . . . 'social concern' that actively makes our community a better place to live." Our congregation takes these words from our philosophy of ministry seriously.

Sunday, May 1, 25 people (nearly half of our Sunday attendance) walked 10 kilometers for hunger. Twenty-five percent of the money raised went into our local food bank, and 75 percent went to organizations like the Baptist World Alliance. Our group included a mother pushing her baby, teens walking and running, and adults chatting. People who care.

Another indication of our philosophy of caring: Take a dozen teens, many from broken homes—smoking, just looking for something to do. Mix with four adults who care about youth. The result is a Bible study and a place for teens to ask tough questions and to explore options for their lives. The cost is not cheap. It means youth coming and going at all hours. It means a refrigerator that is hard to keep full. It means providing a bed in which to sleep for a night and, at times, for months. People who care.

The caring continues as three men pressure wash the deck of a home for a single mom . . . one man fixes the garage door for a woman whose husband is out of town . . . women bring meals and clean house for a family following surgery. People who care.

Is Federal Way, Washington, a better place because North American Baptist Conference planted a church here? I think the answer to that question is a resounding yes! -Larry Neufeld, church planter, Cascade Baptist Fellowship, Federal Way, Washington

Church Planting: Just a Dream?



"Oh no! Too bad, it was just a dream!" Who hasn't awakened from a great dream and said those words? But sometimes dreams come true.

Our dream was to start a new church that would bring unchurched people in our community to Christ, disciple them, and gradually transform our community.

The dream dawned in 1990 when I, as a pastor, sensed God's leading to start a new daughter church. With the support of our church, we formed a small nucleus of about a dozen adults, a small but highly motivated team.

During the first ten months of 1991, our team expanded as we trained, planned, raised funds, visited innovative churches, surveyed our community, and began practice services in preparation for our first Sunday service in October 1991.

We offered a non-traditional service (called a Seeker Service) to attract unchurched people and creatively present Christ to them. Instead of forming a choir, we formed a band with guitars, keyboards, and drums. Instead of hymns, the band performed upbeat songs. We assembled a drama team to perform skits to enhance the message. Sermons were designed with the unchurched person in mind: practical, simple, and evangelistic.

Why all these unconventional methods? Because the goal of our Seeker Service was not to please ourselves but to reach the lost (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

In addition to our Seeker Service, we have a weekly New

Community Celebration (a service designed for believers) and a network of Care Groups.

Since 1991, our progress at Stony Creek has been steady and good. The number of people who frequent Stony Creek is well over 200! But most importantly, dozens of people have come to know Christ as Savior, have been baptized, and have started down the road of Christian discipleship.

Not all dreams come true. Sometimes church planting seems more like a nightmare! But when I stand back and reflect, I feel a deep sense of satisfaction: The dream is coming true! -Randy Rheaume, church planter, Stony Creek Church, Shelby Township, Michigan

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A Church Cares for the Hurting in Inner-City

In South Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Christian Compassion Baptist Church is located, the abandoned, dilapidated houses, marked with loud graffiti, are accepted symbols of poverty, fear, and hurt. While we try to meet the needs of many of the hungry and homeless, the most glaring and heart-rending situation is the plight of the children.

A little girl and her two brothers, ages four, three, and two, sit in a dim room with no food and no milk, because their crack-addicted, single mom has spent her welfare check and food stamps for cocaine.

A six-year-old boy doesn't talk to anyone, doesn't play with other children, and is afraid to walk near a church. His dad murdered his mom and put her in the basement. The little boy was tied to the dead body and told not to scream. The funeral just added to the scar.

We are reaching children like these. Alice Evans directs the Sunshine Brigade. She sees that single mothers receive food and clothes, while she shares the Gospel. The children are at the church four days a week to play games, hear Bible stories, learn the three Rs, and enjoy wholesome meals.

Betty Slaffey directs the Vacation Bible School where even teenagers come to escape the tension of drug-related shootouts.

Youth minister Tony Lewis spends time with boys whose fathers are not around. He steers them away from drugs and crime.

There is much more to do, but we are committed to caring. Pray for us; pray for the children. —Samuel Slaffey, church planter, Christian Compassion Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

A New Hope with a Familiar Heart

People without a relationship with Jesus Christ are all around us. This is the concern of WestLake Community Church . . . caring about these people enough to ask, "Why are they not in church? How can we get them into ours"?

In answering this question, those planting this Church concluded that traditional churches were ineffective in reaching unchurched people. Were the traditions beneficial, or enslaving, according to Paul's principle in 1 Corinthians 6:12? The answer must be found by re-examining Biblical supports, by learning what other churches have tried and tested, and by prayer.

Our conclusions led to this premise for WestLake's ministry:

- The rich heritage of hymnody is blended with contemporary praise and worship music, as well as some secular music. (It has been done before, i.e. Martin Luther, Charles and John Wesley.) This gives a musical expression of the attributes of God, for addressing God, and for seeing His relevance to our daily lives.

- The expenses of organs, pews, hymnals, and ornate architecture can be invested in new, appealing technologies, such as sound and lighting systems capable of supporting contemporary styles, video, and computer-generated graphics for presentations and lyrics, plush stackable seating, or the purchase of leasable property. (The Church purchased an office building complex and leases space to businesses to help defray the cost of this church property. The Church meets in one section of the complex.)

- The relaxed "dress code" becomes inviting rather than a stumbling block.



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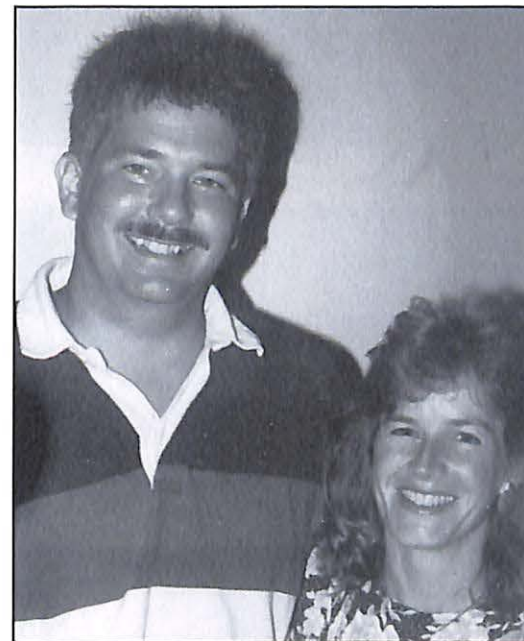
- Using drama lets people see a question or problem in their lives that can be answered with God's Word and prayer. The bottom line for WestLake's ministry is . . . if it is edifying to God and it is conducive to building up a lifestyle that is worshipful to God throughout the week, then WestLake wants to try employing it.

WestLake Community Church began with 14 people in the summer of 1992. Two years later, the Church has about 140 people who have come alongside as Ministry Partners and Regular Attendees. All of these people are growing in Christ or growing toward Christ, and looking to reach out to all around them to share about a relationship with Christ. —Jonathan Scott Willis, worship leader, WestLake Community Church, Garland, Texas (Bradley Grubb is the church planter.)

Caring and Witnessing through Relationships in Vancouver

The re-entry of baby boomers and busters back into a vital relationship with Christ and His church takes focused efforts. NW Community's most effective means of bringing people "back to the Father's house" has been simply inviting our friends, our coworkers, and our neighbors to join us for worship or other special events. This may sound "too" simple or outdated, but in reality, it is the most effective means God has created — the networking of relationships.

I stopped by the home of a couple and invited them to our Easter Service. They were not able to make it that Sunday, but a few weeks later, they came. It didn't take many Sundays before Katie accepted Jesus as her personal Savior. The reality of her faith kicked in immediately as she thought of her neighbors who didn't know Christ.



Katie invited them to church, and in the fall, they came. It didn't take very many weeks before Steve and Felicia felt the tug of the Holy Spirit drawing them to Himself. At the conclusion of our worship one Sunday, both Steve and Felicia with bowed heads and heavy hearts raised their hands with a desire to become Christians — separately, without the other knowing.

It wasn't long before Steve and Felicia mentioned to me about their friends, Ryan and Kris, whom they wanted to bring to church. Ryan grew up in a pastor's home as a young boy, but his father had left full-time ministry and the church.

Kris started attending our service. On Easter, Ryan showed up reluctantly. I could see by the look on his face that he was very uptight about even stepping through "school" doors. At the end of the service, Ryan said, "The service really touched me; I need to talk to you."

On that Monday evening, I found myself in their home having a very meaningful discussion. Finally, after midnight, I asked Ryan if he would like to invite Jesus to become His Lord and Savior. He said he did, and the tears of joy flowed that night.

This past Easter, Ryan's mom and dad came to church. Deeply touched by the service, she later told Ryan that she has "come home to the Lord." Pray that his father will as well.

The people in our fellowship are excited about passing the baton of their faith to those with whom they have relationships. And what's happened to

Katie and her husband, Scott? Well, their two children, Chris and Stephanie, have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Scott is our faithful treasurer and is now teaching one of our adult classes, and yes, they're still inviting.

—Byron Brodehl, church planter, NW Community, Vancouver, Washington

From Unchurched Unbelievers to Devoted Followers of Jesus

The purpose of West Sound Community Church (WSCC) is to produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ from unchurched, unbelieving people. Since its beginning in 1990, WSCC has grown from six people to an average attendance of 200 on Sundays. More than 60 percent of those attending come from unchurched backgrounds.

WSCC's strategy incorporates seven steps. Step one involves believers building bridges to the unchurched through genuine friendships. Once a relationship of integrity is established, believers will have opportunities to share a verbal witness (step two) with their unsaved friends. It's at this point that believers need a place to bring their unchurched friends so that they will continue to be challenged in a relevant way to consider the claims of Christ.

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Therefore, step three provides a service for seekers who are in the process of making a decision for Christ. This service uses contemporary music, drama, and practical messages from the Bible to reach the unbeliever and to encourage new Christians.

Once someone has accepted Christ, steps 4-7 come into play. New believers are encouraged to attend our believer's worship service for corporate worship and expository teaching. Small group participation provides accountability and support. Involvement in service is accomplished by first identifying a believer's spiritual gifts and then placing them in ministry. To round out the discipleship process, believers are taught to be committed to stewardship. WSCC has found this approach to be Biblical and highly effective in reaching our community for Christ. —Rainer Kunz, West Sound Community Church, Silverdale, Washington



Young Church in Philippines Daughters New Church

“Our Legazpi church, five years old, with approximately 60 active members, launched its first daughter church planting venture in January. The first meeting in the targeted area was held in an apartment on Easter Sunday evening. It was planned as a birthday party, during which time the new believers present gave testimonies and lit their “other birthday” candle. Approximately 30 attended, with almost half being new contacts.” —Leland and Jennell Bertsch, church planters and Bible school teachers, Legazpi City, Philippines

Missionaries Gregg and Maria Evans moved from Legazpi City to Batang, a rural barrio, where they have planted a church, Batang Bible Community. “We recently baptized four people, including one man, an answer to prayer. Another man wants to be baptized.”



Caring by Reaching Unreached People

The blazing red ball began to slip behind the hill when a cloud of dust rolled over our house as a pickup pulled into our driveway. Gingerly unfolding themselves was a family of five and a Fulbe believer. He came to live and study the Bible with this N.A.B. missionary family for three years following the Muslim model of discipleship. “He became part of our family and our daily life,” says the missionary. “He and a Muslim Fulbe seeker, as well as the first Fulbe believer we knew, now faraway in another town, are all growing in Christ despite family persecution. The afternoon sun witnessed our first Fulbe worship service. The day may soon come when dawn will rise over the birth of a Fulbe church.” —N.A.B. missionary

Lives Changed at New Church in Brazil

“We are involved in a small Baptist church with about 40 members in Cachoeirinha,” say Keith and Lilyane Bienert, missionaries serving in Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil. “The church has about 40 members and is only one year old officially, but there are plans to start another church in a different area of the city. As assistant pastor, I help by discipling two new Christians and training youth in music, as well as playing the organ for the choir and church services,” says Keith.

Commanded to Care



One Sunday evening, the Church canceled its evening service to take people by bus to do evangelism in the community of Restinga, where the Bienerts served as church planters during their first term. Forty people went; they passed out tracts and invited people to the service in Restinga that evening. The children's choir sang at a senior citizen's home and two places in the open air. At least three people and the bus driver made decisions to receive Christ as Savior.

A lady in the church has been praying for the salvation of her husband for 27 years. Overjoyed, she told how she led him to the Lord. His life radically changed. “Formerly a professional musician, he now desires to play for the Lord. However, he is very sick due to a life of smoking. I am discipling him, and he is eager to learn,” says Keith.

French-speaking Church Planted in Cameroon

“Our little French church, Eglise Protestante Baptiste, now has six members and at least 20 worshippers each Sunday. We praise the Lord that it is He who builds the house, not us. Pierre, baptized on Easter Sunday, is very excited about being trained as a cell group leader to lead people to the Lord and disciple them,” says Dale Hufnagel, missionary planting a French-speaking church in Bafoussam, Cameroon.

“Because of lack of materials, we write studies for the leaders on topics ranging from discipling new Christians to equipping pastors. At Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary, the Lord is preparing Patrick to pastor this French-speaking church.”

Marcy Hufnagel leads a discipleship class for women. “Up to five women have been coming. Lord willing, some will be ready for baptism when we have finished all the lessons.”

New Churches Planted in Japan

“The Japan Baptist Conference gives church planting top priority,” says Hisashi Murakami, pastor of the Baptist church in Tsu. “Our goal is to establish five churches by the year 2000. We now have started four church plants with one Japanese



pastor and three missionary couples. We are encouraged as we witnessed four baptisms in Inazawa and Kongo. . . the first fruits that have been reaped through baptism since the current church plants were begun. The Japan Baptist Conference now has eight organized churches with a membership of 469, an increase of 30 in 1993. Thirty-two baptisms in 1993 marks the most remarkable increase in the past six years. Twenty-seven home Bible studies are being used by God to bring people to Himself.” One of these new church plants began in the Nagoya area this year with Ron and Joan Stoller as church planters.

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CARING through Theological Education

To train as many new church leaders as possible globally through North American Baptist College, Edmonton Baptist Seminary, North American Baptist Seminary, and overseas theological and Bible schools

NABS Partners with Conference in Training Leaders

For 136 years, North American Baptist Seminary has served the N.A.B. Conference by preparing leaders for ministry and missions. In view of the strong need for workers, NABS set a goal to increase the number of N.A.B. students enrolling by 10 percent each year. This will only be achieved through God's call in the lives of individuals who are nurtured, trained, and called from the context of God's local church. During the 1993-94 year, the Seminary in Sioux Falls, SD, experienced an 18.91 percent increase in the number of N.A.B. Conference students beginning studies. The total number of students was 312. Applications for the next academic year reflect continued growth in the number of N.A.B. students.

To make education more attainable for N.A.B. students, NABS offers a grant to N.A.B. students of \$900 per year in addition to regular financial aid. Canadian students also receive special discounts to compensate for the dollar exchange rate between the two countries.

Yet, there is one great challenge. God's call is confirmed in a person's life when it is affirmed in the local church. We must work together to challenge as many quality persons as possible to respond to God's call.—Charles M. Hiatt, president, N.A.B. Seminary



Caring "Training" Comes through the Seminary

My husband suggested that I consider getting a Masters Degree at North American Baptist Seminary. When we arrived for an interview, I felt it: A sense of deep prayerfulness and intention surrounding the place. Since my enrollment in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program, my teachers have become personal mentors, interested in my development as a unique person and as a professional. They have lived with me through hard times and laughed with me in good times. They have prayed for me and allowed me to struggle with issues of identity and faith, that I might be strong. They have shared themselves with me honestly, complete with human foibles and faults, modeling how to be human and a healer at the same time. I came to North American Baptist Seminary expecting classes and homework, with an occasional friendship. I gained much more. I have been given the freedom to truly discover my gifts, to learn to love and live more fully, and to deepen my faith in God. It is this sense of ministry that I want to carry into my life as a professional counselor. In doing so, I hope to honor well the God and the many people who have so honored me.—Mary J. Adams, student, Master of Arts, Marriage and Family Therapy Program



Opportunities to Care

Supervised Ministry and Pastoral Care expose students to the practical side of ministry. "Placed in a ministry situation under a caring supervisor, the student will hopefully learn what is involved in being a minister in a church, a nursing home, a hospital, a prison, or some other type of ministry that interests them. Through this, they apply what they learn in the classroom. Also, they discover questions about ministry that they can bring to the classroom," says Hugh Litchfield, director of supervised ministry, N.A.B. Seminary.

In Pastoral Care, students learn how to practice and to model the skills



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which build and maintain pastoral relationships of caring through initiative, visitation, and routine pastoral roles. "Students are challenged to invite congregations to discover and use their pastoral gifts in everyday life as lay ministers of the church. In Clinical Pastoral Education, students can rediscover their personal and pastoral identity as resources for entering human crises and conversations as instruments of God's care," states Dan Leininger, professor of pastoral care and counseling.



A Senior's Reflections on Caring

As I walk through the doors of North American Baptist Seminary for the last time, I feel a variety of emotions. Although I am very excited that I have completed my Master of Divinity degree, I find it difficult to leave this community I have grown to know and love. I feel that the Seminary has become more than a place of higher learning.

I remember three years ago how quickly I became involved in this loving, giving, encouraging, supporting, and accepting community. This is a community that has allowed me to use my gifts to support others and has also touched my life, as well as that of my wife and children.

After my uncle was murdered this spring, the Seminary community showed me its love in so many ways. God used this community signifi-

cantly to help me endure this difficult time of my life.

As I leave the Seminary, it is my goal to facilitate the same kind of community as a hospital chaplain. Thank you, NABS, for deeply touching my life and, in turn, allowing me to pass the love of Jesus Christ on to others.—Jeff Hastings, 1994 M.Div. graduate, N.A.B. Seminary



Pastoral Care Classes and Field Training Experiences at Edmonton Baptist Seminary

In the Pastoral Care area, Edmonton Baptist Seminary offers a core curriculum as well as many elective courses. The courses deal with such important issues as learning to understand oneself through an examination of one's family and background, conversion experience, call to ministry, and personality issues.

Emphasis is given to such essentials as communication skills, death and bereavement, funeral services, pre-marital and marital issues, weddings, crisis situations, conflict situations, church discipline, and referral. Classes emphasize both the cognitive and the experiential aspects of pastoral care. For that reason, there are lectures, role-play situations, student research projects and presentations, films, and actual pastoral event studies (case studies).

The Pastoral Event Study (PES) is especially helpful in the learning of pastoral care. The student involved in a pastoral care situation subsequently writes a report of the ministry event, including the actual dialogue. Peer and professor evaluations of these ministry situations are very helpful in the learning process. Students having a concentration in the Pastoral Counseling area are also required to take a three-month accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) internship in a hospital.



Producing N.A.B. Leaders—Whose Task Is It?

Let me tell you about Philip. The name is fictitious. However, the account is true. Philip grew up in a fine Christian home and attended an active North American Baptist Conference church. He was much like all of the other youth of the church.

One of the things unique about this church was that entering into mission service and church leadership was given high regard. When Philip reached his teen years, the pastor drew him aside one day and said, "Philip, have you ever thought of being a pastor or Christian worker? We, as pastors, will some day have to be replaced. I think God may be calling you!" Philip never thought he was capable enough, but the challenge from this beloved pastor never left him.

Commanded to Care

Some years later, when Philip felt called to enter college and go to seminary, he was specifically directed to N.A.B. Conference schools. His family and church encouraged him. It was in N.A.B. schools that he was well-trained and encouraged to serve in the N.A.B. fellowship. He did so with distinction!

What am I saying? Simply this! It takes more than a seminary to produce leaders. Churches need to spawn leaders. Pastors need to feel constrained to reproduce themselves. Candidates for leadership need to be directed to N.A.B. schools for training. N.A.B. schools need to give priority to N.A.B. churches in their recruitment, and N.A.B. administrators need to assist graduates to get started in N.A.B. Conference churches.

As a pastor, I said, "If we don't supply candidates, we don't deserve to have pastors." I still believe it! —Paul Siewert, N.A.B. College/Edmonton Baptist Seminary president

Theological Education is a high priority on all of our overseas mission fields," says Dr. Herman Effa, missions director. "Reports give record enrollment in the schools in Nigeria and Cameroon. Enrollment at the Seminary in Porto Alegre, Brazil, continues to increase, and our missionaries serving in the Philippines continue to train national workers on a Bible school level to serve as pastors." The training received and the caring nurturing of future leaders and pastors by nationals and missionaries make a difference in the Bible teaching and discipling of seekers and believers. Many of the leaders on the Fields as well as the General Secretary of the Cameroon Baptist Convention are recent graduates of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu.

Committed Students Make Sacrifices

Even though Cameroon is experiencing economic problems, Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary experienced its highest enrollment in 1993-94 with 159 students. "There is a shortage of beds, desks, and chairs. Many students struggle along on one meal a day in order to pay their fees. We've seen God care for His own. Women representing the Nkambe and Ndu Fields came to the Seminary with bags of corn and rice, beans, yams, and plantains, that they had grown. They donated the produce to the students. The people want trained leaders and are willing to sacrifice to make this possible," says Missionary David Burgess, who serves as Librarian and Director of Financial Services at the Seminary. "God is using His caring people to help feed the 158 students plus 80 children who are part of the CBTS family."

In 1994, thirty-one students graduated from the Seminary. "God is faithfully blessing the ministry of graduates and other leaders as we see both numeric and spiritual growth in our Cameroon Baptist Convention churches. They desire revival and spiritual renewal in Cameroon," says Burgess.

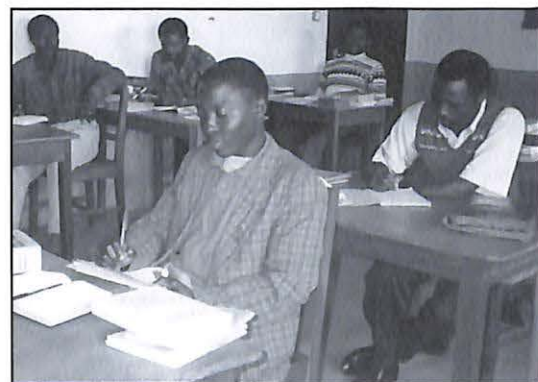
Seminary Students Write Training Materials

This year Missionary Annemarie Hattenhauer designed a new course, "Training Christian Education Personnel," at the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary. During this course, the students helped to write a manual, "Training National Bible Teachers," dealing with the personal life and the work of the Bible teacher of children, youth, and adults. They also wrote two series of Bible lessons for children. Through this training, we pray that God will accomplish His purpose of causing new Christians to grow in Christ, as they are taught His Word, as it applies to Cameroonian culture.

This class of 10 students then held six one-day or half-day seminar sessions in Ndu Field Baptist Churches. Attendance varied from four to sixty-four people. "We want more teaching." "Why did you not call more people to attend?" responded Cameroonian Christians who attended the "trial sessions" of six seminars for Bible teachers.

On weekends, students needing to complete internships serve as Bible teachers and/or preachers during their Field Education assignments.

Many of those in leadership positions on the Ndu Field in Cameroon as well as the General Secretary of the Cameroon



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Baptist Convention are recent graduates of the Cameroon Baptist Theological Seminary in Ndu. "It's important for me to continue to be faithful in my day-to-day routine of writing lesson notes, teaching, marking assignments, and setting up courses to equip students to conduct seminars to train Bible teachers for the Cameroon Baptist Convention," says Missionary teacher, Annemarie Hattenhauer.



A Strong Sense of God's Call

During the 1993 school year, the Rio Grande do Sul Baptist Theological Seminary in Porto Alegre had 33 full-time students and 26 part-time students. "Although there were no graduates in 1993, it is expected that there will be a good group of graduates in 1994," says Pastor Bruno Seitz, director.

National missionary, Florinda Serafin, a graduate of Edmonton Baptist Seminary, and Missionaries Keith Bienert and Richard Rabenhorst, as well as pastors, who volunteer their services, serve as professors.

"The Seminary year runs from March to December with classes each evening from 7:15 to 10:30 p.m.," says Bienert. "Most of the students work all day from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and then go to seminary classes. They are also expected to be involved in their churches on the weekends as part of their practical field education."

Because of the difficult and demanding life of the Seminary students, they usually have a strong sense of God's call on their lives, or they would not make the necessary sacrifices.

The basic curriculum of the Seminary is very similar to that of our North American Seminary curriculum. In addition to seminary classes, students are required to be involved in field education as well as the yearly summer (January) evangelistic outreach. "Each student must be involved for at least two weeks as well as one month of internship," says Bienert. "Seven seminary students were involved in door-to-door evangelism and children's meetings, and showed the JESUS film. It is in these ministry opportunities that students learn to care; thus making their education more practical and profitable." An evangelistic team of four students, trained by Lilyane Bienert, travels every weekend in ministry, also.



Theological Education Made Readily Available in Philippines

Albay Bible Community of Legazpi City in the Philippines recently celebrated its fifth anniversary. This young church of only 60 members has already commissioned three of its men for church planting and pastoral ministries in and around Legazpi. Several others are showing evidence of God's call upon their lives for similar ministry. We believe one of the reasons for this high ratio of workers coming from one congregation is that from the beginning, theological education has been readily available to all the members.

By taking the training to where the people live and work, those who for economic or family reasons would never consider going away to attend Bible school, now have the opportunity. Others take one or two courses that interest them and through that find themselves being drawn by the Holy Spirit into serious preparation for ministry.

With the shortage of trained pastors throughout the Philippines, our work would have been seriously hindered had we not found a way to train leaders from among the believers in our area. From a personal point of view, as a missionary, nothing is more rewarding than to be able to teach men in class several evenings each week and the rest of the week work side by side with them in ministry. We thank God for leading us to develop our Bicol Baptist Theological Training Center and for the way He is using this program.

In 1993, 12 subjects were offered for study at BBTTC. At least four of the 15 students took courses to prepare them for full-time Christian service, and of these one graduated. —Lee Bertsch, church planter and Training Center director and teacher

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

Churches in Canada and the U.S.A.

This map reflects the number of churches, membership, average worship attendance, number who received Christ, and number of baptisms. (- under/+over 1992)

British Columbia Association
25 Churches
4,190 Members (-57)
4,609 Av. Worship Attendance
226 Received Christ
143 Baptisms

Alberta Association
49 Churches (incl 1 CPP)
1 CPP
8,048 Members (-137)
8,710 Av. Worship Attendance
216 Received Christ
312 Baptisms

Saskatchewan Association
14 Churches
1,275 Members (-14)
1,379 Av. Worship Attendance
20 Received Christ
36 Baptisms

Manitoba Association
17 Churches
1 CPP
2,421 Members (+9)
2,601 Av. Worship Attendance
56 Received Christ
73 Baptisms

Minnesota/LaCrosse Association
12 Churches (inc. 1 CPP)
1,419 Members (-70)
1,094 Av. Worship Attendance
12 Received Christ
48 Baptisms

Great Lakes Association
29 Churches
2 CPP
6,811 Members (-7)
6,131 Av. Worship Attendance
182 Received Christ
236 Baptisms

Pacific Northwest Association
16 Churches (inc. 2 CPP)
2,077 Members (+44)
1,703 Av. Worship Attendance
79 Received Christ
80 Baptisms

Northern Dakota Association
16 Churches
2,169 Members (+11)
1,725 Av. Worship Attendance
41 Received Christ
74 Baptisms

Wisconsin Association
11 Churches
1 CPP
2,215 Members (-369)
2,049 Av. Worship Attendance
27 Received Christ
79 Baptisms

Eastern Association
25 Churches (inc. 2 CPP)
3,468 Members (-55)
3,412 Av. Worship Attendance
133 Received Christ
106 Baptisms

Central Dakota/Montana Association
26 Churches
1 CPP
3,392 Members (-10)
2,710 Av. Worship Attendance
74 Received Christ
41 Baptisms

Northern California Association
18 Churches
3 CPP
6,547 Members (+373)
6,999 Av. Worship Attendance
508 Received Christ
266 Baptisms

Central Pacific Association
14 Churches (inc. 1 CPP)
1 CPP
2,368 Members (+58)
2,182 Av. Worship Attendance
72 Received Christ
69 Baptisms

South Dakota/Wyoming Association
16 Churches
2,777 Members (+4)
2,234 Av. Worship Attendance
78 Received Christ
83 Baptisms

Iowa Association
14 Churches
2,115 Members (-95)
1,492 Av. Worship Attendance
49 Received Christ
33 Baptisms

Illinois Association
13 Churches
1,882 Members (-7)
1,386 Av. Worship Attendance
42 Received Christ
49 Baptisms

Atlantic Association
17 Churches (inc. 2 CPP)
1 CPP
2,046 Members (+42)
1,866 Av. Worship Attendance
67 Received Christ
92 Baptisms

Southern California Association
13 Churches
1 CPP
2,203 Members (+33)
2,445 Av. Worship Attendance
89 Received Christ
152 Baptisms

Southwestern Association
24 Churches
2,134 Members (-46)
1,775 Av. Worship Attendance
39 Received Christ
40 Baptisms

Southern Association
15 Churches
1 CPP
1,493 Members
1,435 Av. Worship Attendance
85 Received Christ
49 Baptisms

Florida Church
1 Church
93 Members (+3)
71 Av. Worship Attendance
3 Received Christ
4 Baptisms

1993 STATISTICS
385 Churches
13 Church Plants*
61,143 Members
58,008 Av. Worship Attendance
2,065 Baptisms
2,098 Received Christ

**Church planting projects are those churches receiving Conference support but not received into the Association as of December 31, 1993.*

Commanded to Care

MBTS Is a Power House

"The Mambilla Baptist Theological School is the power house of the Mambilla Baptist Convention," says the Rev. Peter Jumvuh, principal. "It has become the backbone of the Convention as both men and women are trained in the college to promote the gospel ministry of our Lord in the villages and churches of the Convention. Some graduates are teaching Christian Religious Knowledge in primary and secondary schools. In 1993, following graduation, 21 pastors, including three women, went out to serve the Lord in the churches and as Christian Religious Knowledge teachers. In 1994, the student body totaled 122; of these, 28 graduated.

Theological Education by Extension continues in Nigeria. Missionary Jim Mische produced study guides for "Hebrews" and "Culture and the Christian Home," which are used in these classes.

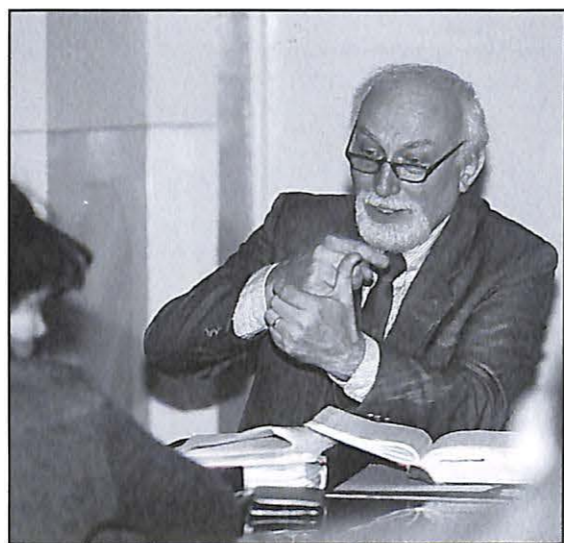


Bible School to Begin in Russia

Plans are in process for opening a Bible school in Samara, Russia, October 3, 1994. Dr. Harold Dressler, missionary to Eastern and Central Europe, coordinates this ministry for our Conference. In consultation with the Russian Baptist leadership, Dressler determined the curriculum, class schedules, and assigned teachers.

The Bible school will run from October through June 3, 1995. Sixteen volunteer teachers from North America will serve for a two-week period each, teaching one concentrated Bible and/or ministry course. The school is designed to prepare 20 young people to become church planters, church missionaries, and Sunday school teachers for Russian Baptist churches.

Samara, a university city of one and one half million, is situated on the Volga River about 1,000 kilometers southeast of Moscow. Three Baptist churches with a membership of more than 1,200 are vigorously engaged in evangelistic outreach in Samara. A fourth church will be planted in the Public Library, where the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses meet, also.



Theological Education Provided in Europe

Pastoral training continues as Dr. Harold Dressler teaches at the Baptist Seminary and Bible School in Novi Sad, Serbia; in Austria; in Hungary; in the Czech Republic; and at the Baptist Seminary in Moscow. Much appreciation is expressed for Dr. Dressler's ministry. "We ensure you that every penny you invest in supporting God's ministry to us in Novi Sad is being multiplied through Dr. Dressler's faithful teaching and inspiring preaching of the Word of God," says Zelimir Srnc, director, Bible Theological Training Center. "We express our gratitude from the bottom of our hearts to your mission for making it possible for him to help us prepare men and women for the Lord's ministry to the Church and through the Church."

In September, several N.A.B. Conference pastors will be teaching and doing evangelism in Bulgaria. Two students from Bulgaria studied at North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls and at North American Baptist College in Edmonton this past school year.

Commanded to Care

CARING

by Volunteering

To provide Volunteer in Missions service opportunities for at least 50 youth and adults in 1994

More than 100 volunteers served in individual and team ministries on N.A.B. Conference mission fields in 1993 with at least 50 serving in 1994. "Volunteers continue to make excellent contributions in ministry as well as construction of needed buildings," says Fred Folkerts, associate missions director and volunteer coordinator.

The GATEWAY program provides cross-cultural ministry and service opportunities for individuals and groups. In 1993 Fred and Nancy Folkerts led a group to serve in Mexico City, where they experienced "wonderful results from ministries, such as prison evangelism, park outreach, Scripture distribution, and Vacation Bible School. Forty-one children made decisions for Christ. We also had the fun of redecorating the entire inside of the church sanctuary," says Folkerts. In July 1994, the Folkerts led another team that served in outreach and evangelism ministries in Mexico City with missionaries, Juan and Amanda Luna.

Dr. Walter Kerber, the Rev. Ken Priebe, and a team of 45 persons from Canada did construction work on a church building for a new church plant, and evangelism through the showing of the JESUS film in Ingleses, SC, Brazil.

Dr. and Mrs. Manuel Mariano of Grand Forks, ND, volunteered their medical expertise in ophthalmology in the Philippines in early 1994. By using their skills in eye surgery, many people were able to see again. It is hoped that along with the medical help received that Bible study groups will become church plants in these areas.

Thirteen volunteers headed by Darrell Schuh of Elk Grove, CA, spent three weeks in Cameroon, where they worked nine days putting a roof on Ebouh Barre Baptist Church in Nkongsomba. The team, which also toured the mission work in Cameroon, returned to America with gratitude to God and a greater desire to fulfill the Divine Commission.

Several N.A.B. Conference pastors are volunteering their services to work alongside some churches in Bulgaria in evangelism and church planting in September 1994. The teachers at the new Bible School in Samara, Russia, are also volunteering two weeks of their time to teach there.

The women of our churches continue to volunteer time to provide much needed medical supplies through their White Cross ministries. A shipment was sent to Cameroon in February.



Commanded
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CARING through Witnessing

Invite people to follow Christ and to encourage them to become a vital part of a local church

On all overseas mission fields as well as in North America, the Lord gives us opportunities to witness. Through evangelism ministries overseas, 3,000 came to know Christ, followed the Lord in baptism, and joined a local church. In North America, 2,098 received Christ as Savior and 2,065 were baptized. As we take these opportunities, we are blessed, and others come to know the Lord or move closer to that point. Some of the needs and opportunities are related here.

We Feel So Blessed

"We feel there are no other people so blessed as we who serve the Lord on mission fields," state Juan and Amanda Luna. "Why? We witnessed in the Santa Ursula area in Mexico and reached people for the Lord. Twenty people were baptized. Eighty-three persons made decisions for the Lord in the streets."



No Idea How Much Peace

Easter was absolutely great! We eclipsed 200 for the first time in our existence and baptized nine. Two made first-time decisions for Christ, and two rededicated their lives.

One who made a first-time decision for Christ was a man who came alone. Well thought through over a long period of time, he gave his heart to Christ at home that afternoon. He desires to grow in Christ and to share the Good News with his wife, children, and men at work. "I had no idea how much peace a person can have when his sins are totally forgiven," he says.

—Byron Brodehl, church planter, Vancouver, Washington

He's My Hero

"He's my hero," says a missionary, referring to Emmanuel, who goes out weekends to do evangelism. What's unique about Emmanuel?

Born deformed—without legs—in War War, Nigeria, Emmanuel began life differently than most. Usually, parents ignore deformed children here. But Emmanuel's parents are different. They are Christians and members of First Baptist Church of Gembu. They cared for him and sent him to primary school. He graduated at the top of his class and now studies at a government teacher's college.

Through the caring concern of his Church, Emmanuel saved enough money to purchase a three-wheel bicycle — one he pedals with his hands.

Here comes the hero part: On weekends, Emmanuel, about 15 or 16 years old, rides his bicycle to villages where he witnesses of the love and saving power of Jesus Christ. On one of these weekends, he visited seven churches and gave his testimony. As a result, 56 people accepted Christ as Savior.

Two Years Is Short-term?

"Two years is short-term?" my friends questioned as I prepared to leave Canada for Japan to teach conversational English classes. Now my two years have come to an end, I feel it is too short, so I have extended my time in Japan," says Yuri Nakano, a Japanese young woman from Canada.

"Since many Japanese are eager to learn English, making contacts via conversational English classes is a good way to intro-

Commanded
to Care



duce the Japanese students to Christ. These opportunities come as I teach English at Central Glass Company, or at the University class to medical students, or at Takada Women's College. The challenging part comes in seizing opportunities to share Christ whenever possible."

On Saturdays, Yuri taught a Bible class to nursing school students, who virtually knew nothing about Christ. Two young men, university students, are also in the Bible class. One is a seeker and the other intellectually attacks Christianity. "I continue to respect the Japanese Christians here who patiently persevere to bring their loved ones to Christ," she says.

"I am so thankful that God uses my English-speaking ability and my Japanese background, which I had taken for granted, for His service. I continue to learn the need for prayer. My love for God and the desire for the people of Japan to know Him as personal Savior has not weakened but has gotten stronger. I encourage others to come to share the love of Jesus with the Japanese people."



Witnessing through Short-term Ministry

The Japanese struggle with some of the same things we struggle with. . . materialism, status, pride. They also struggle with some of the same questions Westerners ask: "Are we really born as sinners"? "Seeing all the evil in this world, is God really good"? "Isn't it enough just to be a good person"? They also struggle with their traditional religions and a certain amount of superstition, the feeling that they should practice these traditions "just in case."

I enjoyed, yet struggled with, the fact that I was always a foreigner in Japan. Often I wished I could melt into the crowd, but it has given me many opportunities to speak with Japanese of all ages. The question, "What do you do here?", led to many conversations about Christianity and my faith, especially during my many hours on the train. When children came up to me wanting to practice their English, I took this opportunity to invite them to Sunday school.

One of the women in my Bible study class continues to show interest in becoming a Christian. She is impressed by the "escape" that God has provided — that we can be forgiven of our sin, even though people around us may not be able to forgive.

After serving four years in Japan, I feel sad having to leave my many friends. It has been a joy to see some of them become Christians and to see others' interest in Christ intensify. You can show you care by coming to continue this ministry. — Debbie Kern, Edmonton, Alberta, short-term missionary who served in Japan

Unreached Villagers in Mexico

There are no Christian men in the fishing village of la Manga in Mexico, where we have a Tuesday afternoon service. One of the men sat in his little shack with tears streaming down his cheeks. He knows he's not saved, but finds it too hard to give up his life of sin.

He told us how a large sea animal got tangled up in his fishing net. It began to pull them farther and farther out to sea. It told him that this was like a life without its anchor in Jesus Christ. Without Jesus, we're no match for Satan and the snares of the world."

We minister in very poor fishing villages. The people teach us so much about seafood, fishing, and life on the Gulf. We try to teach them about God and His Word, but the majority of the fishermen are too involved in drinking and lives of sin to be interested. Many are abusive to their families when they are drinking. Most of the adults and older teens can't read. Very few ever marry; they just get together.

The need for the Gospel witness is great. —Sue Baron, career missionary, Sonora State, Mexico

Commanded
to Care

CARING

through Medical Ministry

Caring with Christian compassion means not only providing medical help for physical healing but also spiritual help through witnessing and discipling.

"Even though the past year has been difficult because of the economic malaise in Cameroon, personnel shortages, difficulties in importing drugs, and illnesses of key personnel in health ministry, the Lord sustained," says Pius Tih, Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Board chair.

Yearly, the hospitals and clinics observe a Medical Day of Prayer, which is preceded by a spiritual emphasis week. The churches actively participate in this Day of Prayer for healing of the sick.

Of the 1,013 patients counseled at Bango Baptist Hospital; 81 received Christ as Savior; 345 rededicated their lives to Christ; and 225 Moslems expressed appreciation for the medical ministry. At Mbingo Baptist Hospital, the chaplain counseled 896 persons.

Medical missionaries witness to patients and families and lead discipleship groups and Gospel teams in their area. "It is a joy to have completed leading three Theological Education by Extension courses for hospital staff at Mbingo. Participants took genuine interest in our non-Christian patients and visitors. We looked for ways to show God's love as we cared for them," says Rodney Zimmerman, missionary doctor serving at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon.

"I am burdened over the lack of doctors in Cameroon and Nigeria. Pray urgently for the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers," Zimmerman says. "It was 16 years ago that I first heard the call to come to Cameroon to fill a vacancy of another leprosy doctor who was going on a much needed rest. I cannot 'imagine' having been too busy with my own agenda to have been unavailable to His call and special plan for my life. The need here is urgent. I pray that those God is calling even now would hear His still small voice. He will change and charge your life!"

This year 24 leprosy patients were discharged after completing their treatment. "It was a joyous occasion as a number had been able to go to school while at Mbingo, and others completed their vocational rehabilitation training so they can return home able to make a living in their own right."

Does Caring Matter?

Commanded to Care: to go and find the lost and wayward. Why? Because God has commanded us to do so. Us!

...TO CARE. . .enough to do what it takes so that even those living along (or not too far off) a twisting, rutted, some places—dangerous, one lane, dirt road, trust us enough to not only talk with us, to not only want and take medical care from us, but to believe what we say, and to desire the joyous, eternal life in Jesus Christ to the extent that they not only think of Him as a prophet but also decide to trust Him as personal Lord and Savior.

Young Jenabou (or is it Zenabou, or Aisatou?) lives near that road in Cameroon. Her firstborn sits on her lap, sick with dysentery.

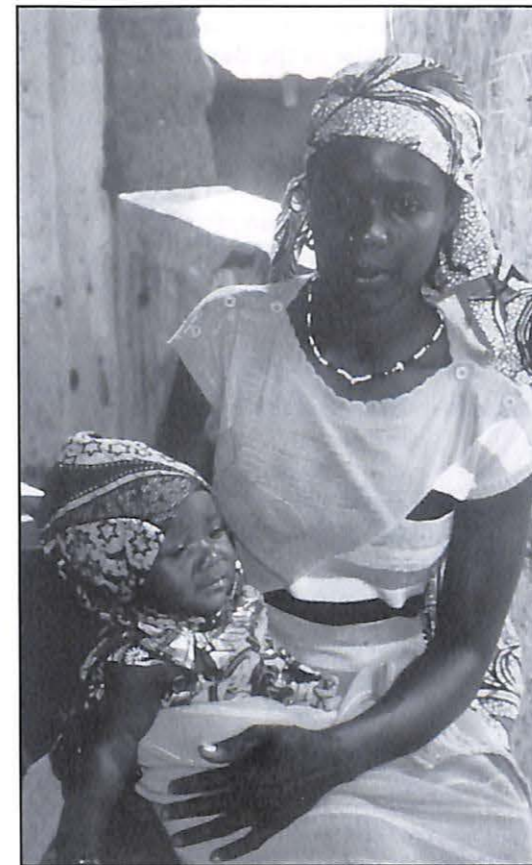
A sixteen-year-old girl is in her first marriage to a man with two other wives, older and more experienced than she. Her concerns center on the welfare of her daughter (her joy in life) and pleasing her husband and the other wives in her new roles as wife, mother (not only for her child but also for the other children, too), and food provider. She is now understanding in a new way the real importance of faithful prayer to Allah. She does not want her daughter to die. So far, her life has been fairly good, and she hopes it will continue.

Lord, she is so shy. . . I hope she heard some of what a village health worker



A village at the "end" of the road

Commanded
to Care



Young non-Christian mother with her child, waiting for medicines

spoke from Your Word. I hope she senses Your Presence here . . . that our lives and actions will show You to her. . . and that she will come back... and her husband, too. Lord, this is going to take time. . . I think a long time.

How much do I care? How much do you care? Does it really matter? — Daphne Dunger, missionary nurse/midwife, Life Abundant Programme, Cameroon

Remote Areas Need Physical and Spiritual Care

We traveled to a distant group of villages in a primarily non-Christian area to assess the health needs of the population which would be served by a proposed village health post. Although the area was predominantly non-Christian, the chiefs and villagers treated us kindly. Our team of 20 people lived in the villages during the ten-day survey. Kathy Kroll and I shared a room in a non-Christian compound. Our host family was polygamous. The head of the household's 18-year-old wife (his fourth and youngest) willingly vacated her small room for us. She helped us in many ways. . . carrying washing water from the river and heating it over her kitchen fire.

While she never complained, life for her is difficult. Having married three years earlier, she confided her greatest sorrow was never having had a child. She feared for her future if she was unable to do what was culturally expected of her.

We visited selected households where each member was screened for specific diseases. It became apparent that we were dealing with an unusually sick population. . . lots of malaria, anemia, and malnutrition, accompanied by an abysmal lack of basic health knowledge. More than 80 percent of the children lacked immunizations entirely. In addition, there's their surpassing need of salvation. — Julie Stone, medical doctor, Bango Baptist Hospital

God's Power Evident in Healing

God's continued power and sovereignty is sure. One patient, Florence, six months pregnant, was brought to Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon with fever and in a coma. Despite treatment for cerebral malaria, she developed seizures.

The staff called Rodney Zimmerman, missionary doctor, to the ward. Mourners surrounded the patient. They had given up hope. "We continued to do what we could, which seemed very little," says Zimmerman. "And trusted God. Our chaplain counseled with the family. By the next day, Florence had stabilized. Within days and to the amazement of her family, we discharged her. We truly praise God for healing, and even the pregnancy was preserved!"

An Answer to Why We Care

Our village health clinics are a major point of Christian contact with the majority non-Christian population. They are cordial, friendly people who appreciate our work. But they have strong religious and social restraints that close them to the truth that would let their names be written in the Book of Life. Some are even named Jesus or Old Testament names. They, like the Jews, still wait for the Messiah who has already come. One worker described our kind of outreach as "We just love them until they ask why." And the Christian community does have workers prepared to give that answer. — Medical doctor Ken and his wife Fran Jones, Nigeria

Commanded
to Care

CARING

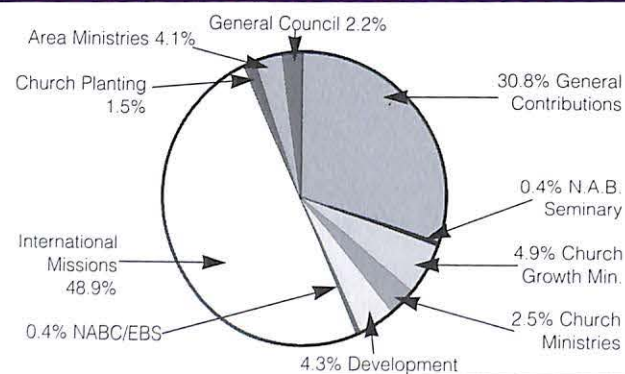
through Giving

Members of North American Baptist Conference churches care. "We see this in the faithful generosity of our people," says Ron Salzman, management services director. "Your faithful generosity has sustained and supported Conference missions and ministries" . . . ministries like those reported in this issue of the **Baptist Herald** . . . such as church planting, evangelism, theological education, area ministries, medical work, and relief ministries.

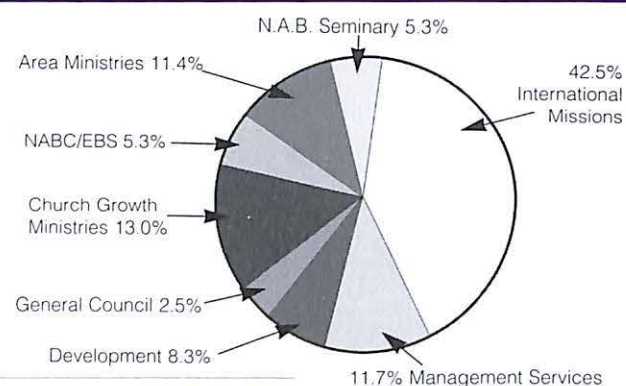
According to the **1993 Yearbook of Canadian and American Churches**, the North American Baptist Conference ranked fourth in per capita giving. Among Baptist denominations, it ranks near the top in per capita giving to Conference missions and ministries.

During the past Triennium, 1991-1993, churches and individuals contributed more than \$18,500,000 for Conference missions and ministries; expenditures totalled \$19,330,000 for the same three years.

HOW THE MONEY CAME IN 1991-1993

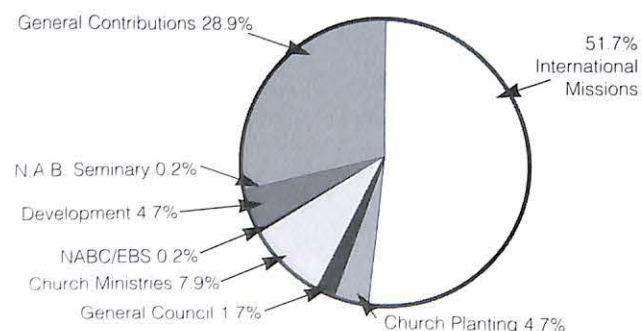


HOW THE MONEY WAS USED 1991-1993

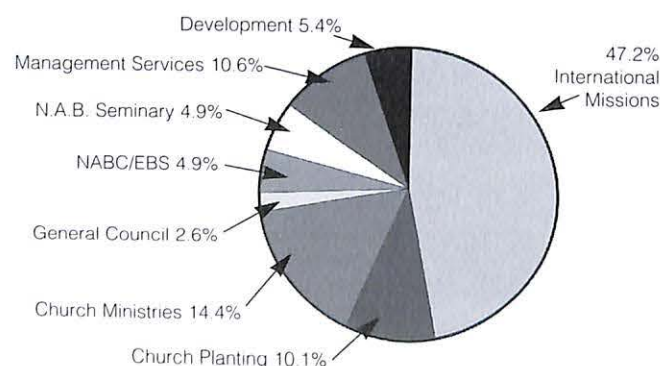


The two charts show the breakdown of income or the way churches and individuals designated their giving and the way the Conference used the contributions. The essential budget and projects are combined. About 70 percent of the yearly contributions are designated for particular ministries. This leaves 30 percent (undesignated or general) for necessary ministries or basic services and ongoing general ministries.

HOW THE MONEY CAME IN 1993



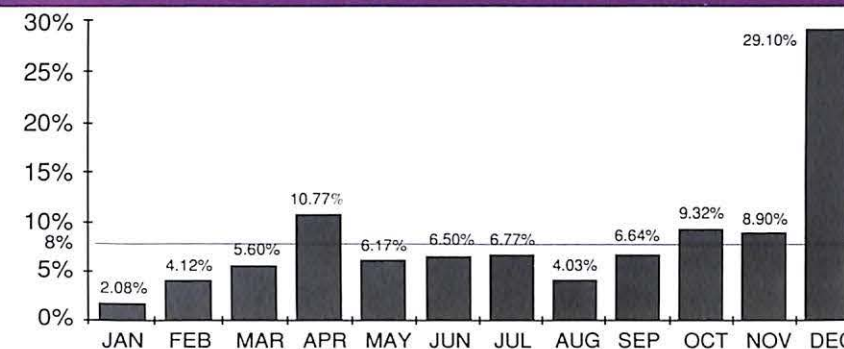
HOW THE MONEY WAS USED IN 1993



Commanded
to Care

It is a test of faith and financial management to plan expenses equal to projected income. Contributions in January and February usually are weak. This graph shows income by month. In December, 29.10% of the annual contributions or \$1,740,210 reached the International Office.

GIVING BY MONTH 1993



1992 AND 1993 TOTAL CONFERENCE GIVING

	1992	1993	Amount Change	% Change
Local Church	\$44,768,574	\$46,517,216	\$1,748,642	3.91%
Conference Ministry	\$6,088,301	\$5,988,683	(\$99,618)	-1.64%
Conf. Ed. Inst.	\$1,156,478	\$1,214,300	(\$57,822)	5.00%
N.A.B. Assoc. Min.	\$1,321,154	\$1,228,021	(\$93,133)	-7.05%
N.A.B. Relat. Min.	\$433,075	\$758,969	\$325,894	75.25%
Non-N.A.B.	\$2,654,086	\$2,423,494	(\$230,592)	-8.69%
SUBTOTAL	\$56,421,670	\$58,130,683	\$1,709,013	3.03%
Other Income	\$492,667	\$285,464	(\$207,203)	-42.06%
TOTAL	\$56,914,337	\$58,416,147	\$1,501,810	2.64%
Avg. per Member	\$927	\$955	\$28	3.06%
No. of Churches*	386	385	-1	-0.26%
Membership	61,389	61,143	-246	-0.40%
Avg. Worship Att.	56,567	58,008	1,441	2.55%

* Does not include church planting projects and churches awaiting recognition.

- Bequest Income: In 1991, \$226,721; in 1992, \$283,909; in 1993, \$275,606.
- The Women Missionary Fellowship raised \$97,938 toward the 1993 Conference budget goal.
- Individuals and N.A.B. Conference churches gave more than \$93,000 for world relief projects in 1993.
- The net worth of the Conference continues to grow and to provide a stable financial foundation for Conference ministries. "It is imperative that a ministry organization of the size of the N.A.B. Conference has a finan-

cial base that will undergird it in times of international currency fluctuations, lagging economies, and budget shortfalls. Through endowments, properties, trusts, annuities, and contributions, the Conference has been able to maintain a strong and growing financial position.

■ Annual audits by independent accounting firms indicate that the Conference is maintaining a high level of financial integrity. Annual audit reports may be secured from the Management Services Department.

1994 GIVING GOAL
\$6,150,000

Church Ministries \$1,072,487

Ministries to established churches, pastors, youth, Women's Missionary Fellowship, church leadership development.

Church Planting \$772,793

Ministries to 23 existing church planting projects and possibly eight new church planting projects in USA and Canada.

International Missions \$3,622,018

Ministry and support services in Cameroon, Nigeria, Brazil, Philippines, Mexico, Japan, and Eastern/Central Europe.

Theological Education \$682,702

Subsidies to North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, SD; Edmonton Baptist Seminary and North American Baptist College, Edmonton, AB.

* The giving goal reflects the entire mission and ministry financial needs of the Conference. Ministry support services and administrative expenses are included.

"Throughout North America and on seven international mission fields, loving care shown by North American Baptists has resulted in communities being changed because Christians showed love and care in Jesus' name," says Lewis Petrie, development director. "Thank you for your partnership. With your financial gifts and prayers, our Conference will continue to make significant contributions in extending the Kingdom of God as we meet the 1994 Giving Goal of \$6,150,000."

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How Does a Christian Will Work?

A Christian will can be implemented and a Christian cause provided for in any number of different ways. Here are three of the best options:

OPTION 1: You can give a percentage of your estate to the Lord's work.

Probably the option most frequently chosen in the past has been that of including some percentage of one's estate for the Lord's work. Often Christians will say that they have been giving a tithe of their income over the years and now want to give a tithe of their estate. Thus, some will designate 10%, 15%, or some other percentage of their choosing to provide for a favorite Christian cause or causes.

OPTION 2: You can make the Lord's work an equal heir with your grown children.

Some Christians choose to give

the Lord's work an equal share to that of the children. They'll never be in better partnership! In other words, if there are two children, then the Lord's work would receive one-third. If there are four children, then the Lord's work would receive one-fifth. If there is one child, then the Lord's work would receive one-half. This is an interesting concept that has found favor with a large constituency of Christian stewards.

OPTION 3: You can "Give It Twice."

The most recent and now the most popular method of giving for Christian stewards today is called the "Give It Twice" concept. By using this plan, all of your estate goes in to a trust at the death of the second spouse, when the children are grown or at the age of termination of a minor's trust. Then, instead of giving the children an equal amount outright, a trust is set up for each child in which they receive all of the income for a period of years. That income is generated until the child or children have received an amount equal to what would have been their original share of the estate. After that period of years, which is usually about ten years if the annual income is approximately 10%, the trust remains intact for the Lord's work. This chart explains the concept in greater detail.

The advantages of "Giving It Twice" are many. Here are a few of them:

- You are able to supply needed funds to your family.
- You provide some added financial safety and security in distributing to children over a period of

approximately seven to ten years.

- You are able to support needy N.A.B. Conference causes of your choice.
- You provide for professional management of investments, resources, and trust assets.
- You can encourage family stability and interaction.
- Even if your estate is a modest one, you can give more to the Lord's work than you ever dreamed possible.

In short, just as in life, if you want your money to work hard for you and want every dollar to go as far as it can, the "Give It Twice" plan continues that sound stewardship after your death through your estate. □

ESTATE OF

Mr. and Mrs. John B. Baptist \$100,000—NET WORTH

Upon the death of the first spouse, the entire estate passes tax free to surviving spouse.

Upon the death of the second spouse, the estate (\$100,000) would be placed in a Charitable Trust with earnings paid to children for as many years as it takes to equal the full value of the estate, i.e., \$100,000 (usually less than 10 years).

Mary Baptist Daughter	John B. Baptist, Jr. Son
\$50,000	\$50,000

After satisfying the needs of the children, the principal of the Trust, (still \$100,000) would go to the Lord's work.

YES, I would also like to receive a free copy of your "Will and Trust Planning Guide."

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Prov. _____ Code _____
Home phone () _____
Work phone () _____
Birthdate _____ Spouse's birthdate _____

Mail to Dr. Connie Salios, N.A.B. Conference, 1 So. 210 Summit Ave., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
• Phone (708) 495-2000
• Fax (708) 495-3301

CARING

for the Potential Fringe Member

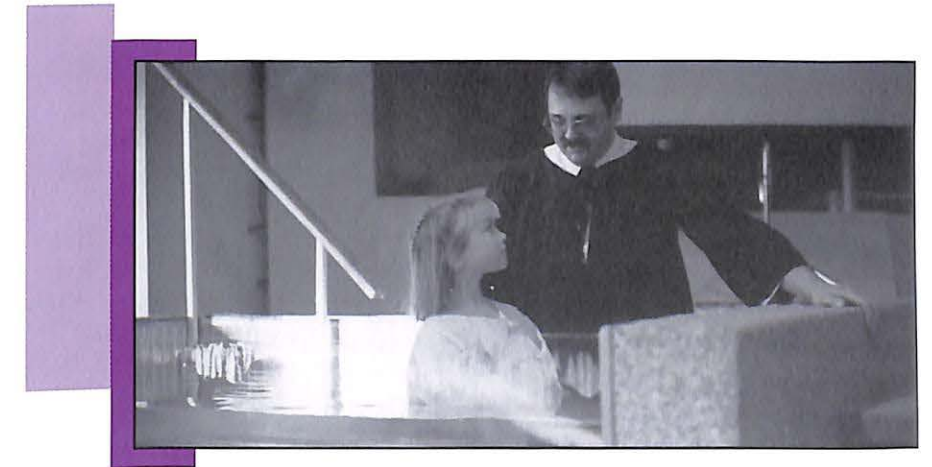
by Rick Laser

Those of us who receive the **Baptist Herald** and are now reading this article would probably not categorize ourselves as fringe church members. We are reading this article because we know all kinds of good Christian people who were once very active in the local church but now seem to have withdrawn from active participation. Indeed, some of these people have actually "dropped out" of church life!

Looking at the title again, you might say: "Don't tell me about the potential fringe member. Tell me, instead, how to care for the person who is already at the membership fringe." The concern is valid. However, even as we practice preventative medicine, so we must learn to practice membership care which has a preventative component to it.

When one looks at the reasons and the way in which people drop out of active church life, a very frightening fact becomes evident. Many of those who are no longer active in the local church were once vibrant church members. This fact suggests that we, too, are potential fringe members! Just as those acquaintances were once involved and then began to "drop out," we also could experience the same thing.

For many of us, it seems like an impossibility that we should ever be part of such a move to the outer edges of the fellowship. Were it to be such an impossibility, however,



the writer of Hebrews would not have made such an issue of it in 10:24,25: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another . . ."

Certainly, the two elements mentioned above are there. There is an element of care: "spur one another on toward love and good deeds . . . let us encourage one another." There is also the element of moving to the fringe: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing . . ."

How does this move to the fringe happen? It can be summarized in one phrase: a lack of personal care.

There are two distinct times when such "carelessness" can have dire results: At the time of initiation into membership, and at any per-

sonal crisis point in one's life, even when one is an active church member. For now let us look at the former situation—initiation into membership.

Initiation into Church Membership

For those who come into the membership of a local church through baptism, testimony, or transfer, the lack of care is evidenced mostly by all the things that are *not* done to assimilate the new fledgling member. While the process of extending care will be somewhat different for each of these membership entrance modes, there are basic care qualities common to all activities of edification and evangelism. For the moment, however, let us look at a brief sketch on how to make the baptismal route into the church more meaningful and assimilative.



A common complaint in Baptist churches has to do with the rate of retention of newly-baptized believers. Although there are many resources and programs dealing with membership assimilation, there is very little that is helpful in dealing with the unique process of the baptismal candidate. Ordinarily, the procedure has looked something like this: A pastor's class is announced; those interested in baptism come; they are given instruction; they appear before the Deacon Board of the church to share their testimony; the congregation votes on each person's membership (and baptism, too?); the person is baptized. Such a procedure has usually resulted in at least three things: A few baptisms each year, an underdeveloped discipling ministry, and a rather lifeless congregation.

A comprehensive approach to membership, discipleship, and small group ministries which I have used with some measure of success, sees the baptismal entry process in three distinct steps: pre-baptismal discipleship, the baptismal event, and post-baptismal discipleship.

Discipleship, in this approach, begins in conjunction with a person's conversion (repenting, confessing, believing) experience. In preparing for such a process in the Baptist congregation, several things need to happen.

- First, material dealing with the early stages of the Christian's life must be chosen. Several versions of this material, suitable for various age groups, must be at hand.
- Second, materials in which a person's faith is related to the step of baptism must either be chosen or written specifically for one's own church situation.

- Third, willing and capable lay people from the congregation must themselves be disciplined by the pastor, using these materials.
- Fourth, these trained lay ministers are assigned to disciple new Christians one-on-one, preparing them for baptism in a personal way.
- Fifth, the result of this discipleship will result in a person's written testimony which is heard by the discipler, a member of the pastoral staff, and a deacon/elder. (At this juncture, congregations employ various procedures determined by their unique constitutions and by-laws.)
- The person has now completed the pre-baptismal preparation and is ready to be baptized. The baptismal event, in my experience, is most powerful when the candidate shares his or her testimony with the entire congregation just prior to being immersed in the waters of baptism.

What are some advantages of this approach, and what is its connection to caregiving? **There can be no greater manifestation of personal care early on in a Christian's life than through personal discipleship.**

Furthermore, even the training and discipling of mature lay ministers by the pastor is a form of intensive caregiving.

- In addition, the congregation is encouraged because baptisms happen frequently (whenever someone has completed the pre-baptismal discipleship process).
- Fourth, each baptism takes on a

more personal note instead of an assembly-line characteristic. Of course, as churches grow and the number of disciplers and new converts increase, one may have to designate a monthly baptismal Sunday.

- Fifth, by establishing a "mentoring" relationship with a mature Christian, newly converted and baptized members develop a strong sense of accountability. Even more importantly, should such a new member be "caught in a sin" (*Galatians 6:1*), he or she will much more likely respond to a "reformatory" type of discipline because a relationship of "formative" discipline has already been established. Church discipline (reformatory discipline) is usually seen as punitive and alienating. Its chances of being truly restorative are much increased when caring discipleship (formative discipline) has been part of the process.

Finally, the joy of entry into church membership is no longer being neutralized as much by the quick exit of young, undisciplined, unassimilated church members. Why? Because care, in this process, is translated into deepened relationships; deepened relationships result in accountability; accountability fuses with responsibility; responsibility assumes the mantle of maturity; maturity will lead us to "grow up into Him that is the Head, that is, Christ" (*Ephesians 4:15*). The end result is that the entire local church, Christ's Body, "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (*Ephesians 4:16*).

"But surely," you question, "deep

(Continued on page 33)

CARE in the Family Circus

by Dan Leininger

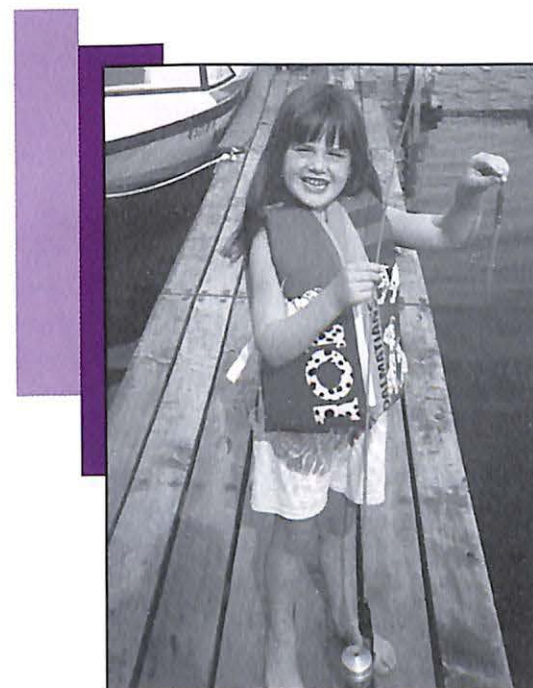
In our everyday hurry, family life can become as busy as a traveling carnival. Through the years, a marriage which began as a double ring ceremony can become a three-ring circus.

Bill Keane in his syndicated cartoon, "The Family Circus," shares the delights of Billy and his family. A typical scene shows Billy standing with baseball hat, ball and glove in hand as Father relaxes in a chair. Billy looks at him and says, "Anytime you're ready, Daddy, I'll be sitting outside growing older." Delightfully, "The Family Circus" calls us to both a humor and a wisdom about love and care in our own family circuses.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus gives his disciples the wisdom and humor of the Beatitudes, then turns to them and says, "You are the salt of the earth." We think of salt as something that adds flavor, which it does. But in the world before refrigeration, salt preserved. In that sense, salt represents "the power that preserves," a saving factor in a perishing world.

As Christians, we are called to care; we cannot season the world if we live in saltless homes. Here are four ways to be S-A-L-T in our homes.

S"Starting over again" is the first way that we can be salt in our own family circus. The only thing more important than knowing how "to start" is knowing how



to "start over again."

Have you ever been lost on a family vacation? There may be something about being male that makes it difficult to stop to ask for directions. Perhaps it is genetic, though I doubt it.

In the movie, "City Slickers," three urban males spend a crazy vacation rounding up cattle. Toward the end of their adventure, the gloomiest of the three wakes up one morning smiling. He looks at his other two friends and says, "My life is a 'do over.'" Then he explains the old childhood trick.

When you make a mistake, you get to do a "do over." Thus a difficult task like playing hockey or sewing a garment becomes easy and graceful after we learn to do it over and over and over again. Men, even women, have a hard time starting over again.

Backing up is the hardest way to start over. In the 1930s, my dad used to drive a Model T Ford in northwest Missouri. He often told the story of slipping and sliding on muddy hills, unable to make it to the top. The trick that most Model T owners knew was to turn the car around, put it in reverse, and back up any hill.

Sometimes backing up is the best form of progress. Of all people, Christians, who have learned the habits of confession, repentance,

"If we, as Jesus' disciples, choose to be the salt of the earth in our homes and churches, maybe then we can get out of the salt shaker and let God's preserving, redeeming love, flavor and preserve the whole earth."

Commanded to Care



and forgiveness, know that life is a "do over."

A "Actions that care" represent the second ingredient of family S-A-L-T. "What are you doing?" demands Billy as Mother quietly turns off the television.

Staring at the blank screen, she calmly announces, "This is called the homework channel." Caring action has no substitute, especially when inaction spells neglect.

For better or worse, children model their behaviors after the actions and responses of parents. In a crowded city restaurant, a father and daughter sat expressionless, waiting for Sunday breakfast. There was no conversation. Both sat looking around the room as if the other wasn't there.

Eventually, the father picked up his newspaper, spreading it wide between him and his daughter. The girl looked impatiently around the room, drummed her fingers on the table, and picked up another section of the newspaper and spread it out wide, mirroring her father. They sat there alone, separated by two sheets of newspaper, until their breakfast finally came.

Jesus continually told stories about shepherds who seek after sheep, fathers who look down the road for prodigals, and disciples who follow Him daily. To live as a Christian is to fill one's life with quiet actions of caring.

L "Listening love" represents the third form of caring in our family life. In a classic "Family Circus" scene, Bill Keane draws Dad with his nose buried in a newspaper as little Jeffie stands beside his chair says, "You hafta listen to me with

your eyes, Daddy. Not just your ears." Eyes that listen extend a respect and love that touches the human soul.

In another cartoon, Bill Keane portrays the fine-tuned radar of a mother's listening ear. Mother and Dad are both in the kitchen, and Mother announces, "Listen, that's P.J. crying." Outside, the yard is filled with children laughing, screaming, jumping, running, blowing horns, dogs barking, air-planes flying, birds singing, and in the middle of all is little P.J. crying.

The Bible is filled with references to how God listens. God hears the cry of the poor, "I will hear for I am compassionate" (*Exodus 22:27*). God hears the groaning of his people in slavery (*Exodus 6:5*). With irony, the Psalmist asks, "He who planted the ear, shall he not hear?" (*Psalms 94:9*). With faith, he affirms, "God, you do see trouble and grief" (*Psalms 10:14*). With hope, he pleads, "Record my lament, list my tears on your scroll; put my tears in your wineskins" (*Psalms 56:8*). God listens both to the unpleasant and the seemingly trivial. This is listening love.

When our son was about five, his fictional hero was Batman. Matt would walk around the house wearing a black bat cape and singing the Batman song. When he would tire of the words, he would change them to "fatman."

One day as I was working at home, I heard him do that and I

stopped and corrected him, saying, "Matt, it's Batman, not fatman." To which he replied, "Batman, fatman, it doesn't make any difference." And I was reminded that whether at work or at play, there are indeed some things that don't really make a difference. However, one thing that always makes a difference is "love that listens."

T "Teaching that preserves" is the fourth kind of care in the family circus. In our hurried society, perhaps no other role has suffered as severely as the parent's role as teacher in the home.

To be a disciple is to be one who has been taught and who learns discipline. Many children have learned neither in their homes. Children who learn that they are always right, that

there are no consequences to their actions, and that unpleasant tasks can be ignored, are being taught to live in a world that does not exist.

In an age of prosperity and consumerism, we may find ourselves guilty of producing children with straight teeth and crooked morals. Parents need to teach their children the way life works and to foster a sense of responsibility and values.

Sometimes these learnings start with the simplest of lessons. As the morning sun shines in the window,

Commanded to Care



Jeffie stands half awake and forlorn beside his bed with his clothes in hand and asks the question, "Will I hafta start every day by putting on my clothes for the rest of my life?"

Sometimes the lessons are a little more obvious, as when Billy gives P.J. a piggy back ride down the hallway and announces to the family, "I'm practicing to be a Daddy." Curious children are perpetually learning and practicing how life works.

When our daughter Rachel was four, we took the children fishing at my sister's house in Michigan. As any parent or grandparent knows, taking children fishing is not about fishing, it is about teaching fishing.

As I showed Rachel the rod and reel, I cast out into the lake. I showed her how to reel in the line and to wait for the fish to bite. So she stood on the dock turning the crank until the cork came all the way back to the dock. Lifting up the hook and looking at the worm, she announced, "Nope, it's not a fish yet."

Sometimes in the process of teaching how life works, parents become the students seeing the world again for the first time through the eyes of the child. Such teachable moments preserve families.

Duke K. McCall, former president of Southern Seminary, once delivered a chapel address under the title of "My Bible." In his sermon, he talked about how his understanding of the Bible had grown through his life from childhood to adulthood.

He began by stating "My first Bible was my mother." He told of his mother's tenderness, gentleness, her touch, the warmth of her lap,

and the love that she radiated in her smile and in her actions.

Many years later when her children had grown to adulthood, they sat with her in her final weeks of dying and letting go. After her funeral, her brothers and sisters gathered to choose an epitaph by which they wanted her remembered. The words they chose were these, "She taught us how to live; she showed us how to die."

Parents never outgrow their teaching role because somebody is always watching. It may be our own children. Or it may be someone else's child. It may be an abused child. It may be a whole church full of people, but somebody is always watching even until we die.

We are a people commanded to care by a Savior who has asked us to be the salt of the earth, the power that preserves, the people of a love that redeems. We can be that salt even in our own family circuses, if we simply remember

- S - Start over again and again
- A - Actions that care
- L - Listening that loves
- T - Teaching that preserves

Jesus believed that we, as His disciples, are the salt of the earth. If we choose to be that in our homes and in our churches, maybe then we can get out of the salt shaker and let God's preserving, redeeming love flavor and preserve the whole earth. □

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Caring for the Potential Fringe Member

(Continued from page 29)

personal relationships are not going to be formed in six to eight weeks of pre-baptismal discipleship, will they?" No, not likely. That is why the final aspect of this formative discipline is the post-baptismal discipleship. What happens now? The same person who disciplined the new convert pre-baptismally now continues the one-on-one discipleship with that same person post-baptismally.

Furthermore, now comes the pastor's class which deals with matters of congregational policy, spiritual gifts, stewardship, ministry opportunities, N.A.B. Conference ministries and missions, as well as small group involvement in the local church.

It is evident that this caring process intentionally begins with personal and intimate discipleship. Ultimately, it seeks to nurture and make new members useful in small group ministries. All of this happens in the ongoing context of active participation in the worshiping community of believers.

Yes, we are commanded to care. In order for this care to be instilled in future generations of believing church members, we must heed the command to care at the point of a person's initiation into the Body of Christ; that is, at the point of believing and being baptized (*Acts 2:38,41,42*). □

Dr. Rick Laser is Associate Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Theology, Edmonton Baptist Seminary.

*Commanded
to Care*

People Who Care



Are the Keys to Church Extension Investors Fund



by almost 75 percent. The potential to loan between four and seven million more dollars in the near future increases CEIF's need for additional investment funds.

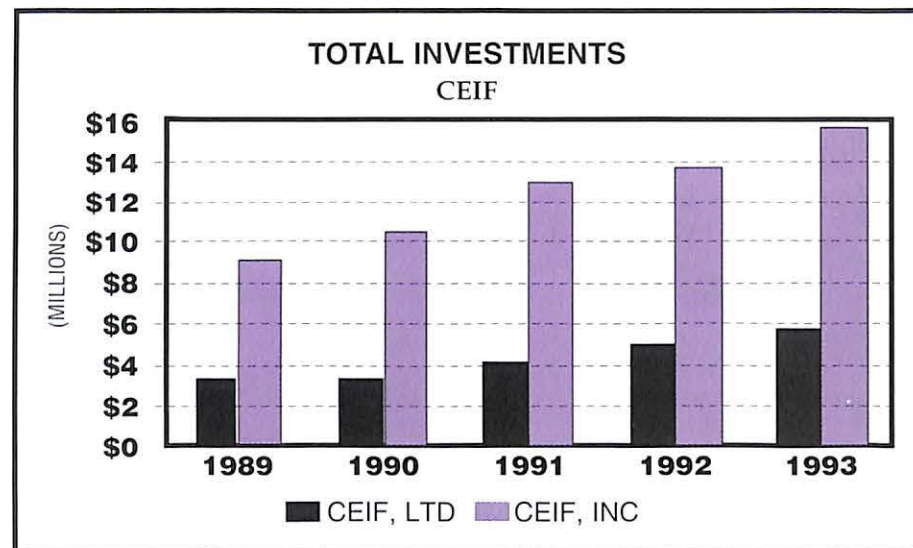
To help increase awareness of CEIF, a Representative Program has been established in our N.A.B. Conference churches and Associations. CEIF Representatives, recommended by pastors and area minis-

CEIF is established on the principle of investors who care about wise stewardship and spreading the word about Christ, and churches who care about bringing people to know the Savior. By God's grace, we work together to build His kingdom.

As the church financing ministry of the N.A.B. Conference, CEIF offers a variety of investments at a competitive rate of interest, and loans those investment funds to churches for expansion projects. While investors earn interest that helps meet their own needs, their investment funds help churches meet others' needs.

CEIF closed 1993 with more than 21 million dollars of investments, an increase of 12 percent for the year. Over the last three years, U.S. investments grew by 48 percent. Canadian investments grew by 66 percent.

This investor response enabled CEIF to make 14 new loans in 1993. Our churches have used these funds to purchase land and buildings, build and renovate. Having established places of worship has impacted their outreach.



Dennis Dearmin, pastor of Valley Community Baptist Church, Tracy, CA, said, "We've had people say, 'We were waiting for your new building.'" Dearmin reported 60 new families visiting and three new Sunday School classes beginning in the first month after moving into their new facility.

Over the last three years, CEIF's total assets climbed from 18 to nearly 25.5 million dollars, an increase of 40 percent. During the same time period, total loans grew

ters, inform their churches or Associations of CEIF opportunities and ministry, providing a vital link between the main office and people.

CEIF deals in finances, but knows that behind the figures are faces. We care about our investors, churches, and the people who believe in Christ through their witness. People who care, reaching people who need care, are the key to this work. Join us in building the kingdom of God for the future. □

Many people would like to make a gift to their church, the North American Baptist Conference, their Baptist association, or other N.A.B. Conference ministry upon their death. They have accumulated assets. Yet right now, they want the income from the assets and want to have the funds available if the need arises.

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"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:34-35, NIV).

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10, NIV).

"The king will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matthew 25:40, NIV).

DEFINITION: Christian caring is valuing others in response to the love of Christ so that we become active partners with them in these ways:

Affirming worth
Celebrating blessings
Guiding choices
Fulfilling responsibilities
Developing potentials
Handling crises

- ▶ **Goal 1:** Foster a deepening attitude of caring and compassion among the members of every congregation.
- ▶ **Goal 2:** Identify needs of individuals in the congregation and in the community.
- ▶ **Goal 3:** Evaluate the utilization of resources in meeting needs.
- ▶ **Goal 4:** Equip people to be involved in caring ministries.
- ▶ **Goal 5:** Develop practical ways to respond to human needs in both the community and church.
- ▶ **Goal 6:** Affirm and encourage caring as a priority in the programs of North American Baptist Conference educational institutions and among Conference leadership.
- ▶ **Goal 7:** Work toward religious liberty, justice, and dignity for all people, and peace among nations of the world.