

THE VOICE NEWSLETTER

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MARCH 2020

PRESIDENT'S CORNER - PASTOR JONATHAN EDWARDS



Greetings, brothers and sisters!

WHY SHOULD I GO TO CONFERENCE?

Perhaps this question has rolled around in your mind a few times. You might think, "I'm just a layperson – what does Conference have to do with me? It seems as though it is for pastors and missionaries and 'official' fellowship business."

If that is what you think, the annual Conference is for you. Please trust me: there is much more than just 'official business' that occurs at Conference! If you've not been to conference in a while, or if you've never attended, I would encourage you to consider these reasons for attending in 2020:

1. Conference provides spiritual refreshment and renewal. Through worshiping together in song, prayer, and sitting under Christ-centered preaching, your soul will be challenged by the Word of God, and you will be reinvigorated to continue doing Christ's work in your local church.
2. Conference is an opportunity to grow your social network. You will be encouraged as you connect with believers from other churches, in different states, and see that we're all working towards the same goal.
3. The theme of this year's conference is on discipleship. You will be challenged to perform a task that is part of the Great Commission and will be given some strategies and ideas that will help you accomplish Jesus' command. You might even find someone who will help disciple you or whom you may want to disciple.
4. Witness first-hand how God is using the CGBCI throughout the world. You will see the reports of missionaries from the various African nations, India, Myanmar, and Papua New Guinea. You'll also see how God is working in the United States through the revitalization work in Vermont. When you see how God is using our small fellowship, you'll be amazed that He can do so much with so "little," for His glory and honor.
5. You'll be a testimony to those we encounter at the hotel – from everyone on the hotel staff to all the other visitors who are curious about what would bring so many people together. The answer, of course, is Jesus!

Please, I would encourage you to *make reservations today*. If you can't stay the whole time, that's okay. Come for the weekend, come for a day; however long you stay, let's come together to encourage one another and keep each other accountable to accomplish Christ's plan for the church in this age!

CONFERENCE 2020

June 26 - July 1, 2020

THE CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

5700 28th St., SE

Grand Rapids MI 49546

Phone: 1-877-270-1393 or 616-957-1770

Mention Conservative Grace Brethren Churches, International or CGBCI for the group discount!

*** REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JUNE 3, 2020 ***

2020 WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

As mentioned in the February Voice Newsletter, this year's Women's Luncheon during Conference is **open to all Post-high Women of the Fellowship**. You do not have to be a pastor's wife, missionary wife, or a widowed pastor's wife to attend the luncheon. The date of the luncheon is **SUNDAY, JUNE 28 from 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm**, and the official theme is "Women to Women Discipleship: The Benefits and Barriers." The cost for the luncheon is \$16 and it will include a chicken Caesar or vegetarian wrap, chips, soup or salad, coffee, iced tea, and dessert. If you would like to attend, please **RSVP to Meredith Edwards** at mere.edwards07@gmail.com or **(419) 606-5537** with your preferred lunch option by **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3**. A future option to RSVP will be available in March using Eventbrite. We will be sending out further information to those who have responded.

Thank you! **Meredith Edwards & Joanne Simpson**

NEWS FROM FELLOWSHIP CHURCHES

ALEPPO BRETHERN CHURCH, PA - JIM LANG, CONTACT PERSON (724) 428-9812

Aleppo has recovered very nicely from the flood damage and continues to thrive in our secluded valley. Our baptistry had to be replaced due to the flood damage, and our brand new baptistry has already been in use on three separate occasions.

Pastor Lanny Hewitt and his wife Joann have proven to be a tremendous asset in the preaching of the Word and ministering to our church family.

Our bimonthly visits to the Cameron (W.Va.) Nursing Home are very well received. Our music director, Gary Jacobs, makes sure that the residents thoroughly enjoy the service.

Upcoming Events: Movie night last fall was so successful that another was held for Valentine's Day. Plans are currently being made for our annual Vacation Bible School held the first week of July. This year's theme will be "Rocky Railway." The puppet ministry delivers a message to the children every Sunday as the children get to hear about God's love through puppet presentations before going to "Children's Church." Our annual "Fall Fest" and hayride was very well attended. We are planning to host a Hymn Sing this spring with the cooperation of many local churches. Hymn Sings in the past have drawn over a hundred people to our church, and we expect this one to be no different. God continues to lead in a mighty way here in Aleppo.

BEREAN FAITH FELLOWSHIP, MOUNT VERNON, OH - PASTOR GORDY HARMON

We are rejoicing in recent growth. As I am writing this article, I can report that we had nearly 40 in our Morning Worship service. We have not done that in a very long time. Numbers aren't everything. Praise the Lord for what He is doing beyond the numbers. We have been so blessed to see our kids grow and become interested in our choir. Our Choir of twelve consists of seven adults and five children ages 10-14. It is a joy to watch them learn.

We were captivated and challenged as a group of eight (ages 6-16) volunteered to be on a "Quiz Team". They worked together diligently to memorize Ephesians 1:1-12. We clapped and cheered them on as they quizzed before our saints after a morning worship service. 90% of the morning attendees stayed to enjoy the blessing that day!

On January 31 the church hosted a Taco Bar and Game Night, we had 31 people there, young and old! It was wonderful, with so much fun and laughter! Many asked for another Game Night, this time with a Soup Bar, which will be held on February 28.

This year's OHIO GBC CHOIR FESTIVAL will be at B.F.F. ON SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 17, AT 6:00 pm. It will be a grand night as our churches join together in song to worship and praise our wonderful God. Make plans to join us if you can. For Choir and Music questions contact Mr. Jesse Bryant.

Please remember us ... coming up November 2020 we will be asked to pay off our Land Contract Note, again. We currently have a balance of approximately \$125,000. We have been the blessed recipients of your prayers, and some have sent us gifts which have helped us reduce the amount we may have to finance. Thank you for remembering us! To God be the glory! May He find us being faithful when He comes!

LOOKING FOR HELPERS FOR CHILDREN'S CONFERENCE:

Might you be looking for an opportunity to serve at this year's Children's Conference? Pastor Gordy Harmon and his wife Jessie are seeking those with a desire to assist our children with their crafts, singing, games, etc. Pastor Gordy will be doing the teaching. There is a need for sufficient support staff to help them assemble a team that would make the Children's Conference enjoyable for both the children and the helpers. That's our prayer! There are part-time and full-time positions available. Our helpers are paid an hourly rate. **If interested or if you have questions, please contact Jessie Harmon: Text or call (740) 504-2248; or email Jharmon18203@icloud.com**

NEW TROY, MI GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH - PASTOR BOB MENSINGER

God is continuing to bless here at New Troy. Praise the Lord! This was a very busy month. Pastor Bob has several people that he calls on every week. Pastor Russell Panico and his wife Kay cannot get out for prayer meetings anymore, so Pastor Bob and Lila meet at their house. Harold Mensinger is doing better at Woodland Terrace, an assisted living facility in Bridgman. Cecil Stice is holding his own out in Tucson, Arizona. Marjorie Gahris is still living with her daughter and son-in-law. Dennis Casto and his wife Flo are not able to get out much due to Denny's reliance upon oxygen 24/7. America Schmaltz injured her foot and is homebound at this time. Our sound man, Curtis Smith has been struggling with some health issues but is doing better now.

We held our annual Valentine Banquet at Cracker Barrel, February 9. We had a turn-out of 12 people despite the inclement weather.

We had the auditorium and vestibule for the church painted in January, and it really looks nice. We especially wanted it completed for District Conference on April 25.

DR. JOHN C. WHITCOMB was promoted to glory on February 5, in his sleep. He was 95 years old. His memorial service was held on February 11, in Indianapolis, IN followed by interment in Warsaw, IN later that day. His homegoing was announced on www.whitcombministries.org website where one can read about his life and ministry.

CORNERSTONE GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH, MANSFIELD, OH – Pastor Philip and Elizabeth Moeller welcomed Josiah Ethan on January 30 in the afternoon. Josiah weighed in at 6 Lb., 12 oz., and is the grandson of Pastor DeLane and Sharon Miller, and former missionaries Pastor Dan and Marylou Moeller. Congratulations!

NATIONAL EVANGELISTIC TEAM –NET '20 NEWS

Listed below are the NET '20 team members. Please be praying for the team as they begin to prepare for their time of ministry July 4 - 19, 2020 in Peru and South Whitley, Indiana. The first week focuses on training and preparing for the second week. However, the team never knows how the Lord will provide open doors to minister. Sometimes in the past, we concluded that most ministries took place during the training week.

MEN:

Reuben Auten- Galion, Ohio
Clay Hannah- Denver, Indiana
Jacob Hochstetter- Orrville, Ohio
Jeremiah Hodgdon- Orrville, Ohio
Joel Kuhns- Orrville, Ohio
Benjamin Miller- Tualatin, Oregon
Gabriel Miller- Albany, Oregon
Johnathan Steiner- Orrville, Ohio

LADIES:

Grace Bolling- Fremont, Ohio
Patience Bolling- Fremont, Ohio
Hannah Hodgdon- Orrville, Ohio
Tia Kelley- Butler, Ohio
Ella Pearson- Denver, Indiana
Shannon Steiner- Orrville, Ohio
Amy Vanderpool- Winona Lake, Indiana

Leaders- Pastor Del and Grace Miller, Wooster, Ohio

We have appreciated your interest and help with this ministry in the past years. Next month we will have information about which team members have been adopted and which ones are still available.

IN THE MEANTIME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT: PASTOR DEL & GRACE MILLER (330) 683-3526 OR (330) 234-1602 OR EMAIL: pastordelmiller@gmail.com at ORRVILLE GRACE BRETHERN CHURCH, 2200 PARADISE ROAD, ORRVILLE OH 44667

HOME MISSIONS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 15, 2020

REVITALIZE VERMONT - PASTOR BRYAN MALEY

IRASBURG and LAMOILLE VALLEY GRACE BRETHERN CHURCHES

Romans 8:28-29 "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

Greetings Dear Brethren,

I am writing today to give you an idea of what is going on in Vermont; specifically what progress is being made in a place where it is reported that men's hearts are as cold and hard as the sod there in the dark, dark dread of winter. These words are gleaned from notes taken from conversations with Pastor Bryan Maley. But let me tell you these words do not have the ability to convey the excitement and energy contained in Bryan's heart. He wears me out! My pen cannot keep up as he moves from one connecting thought and action to another. So bottom line, if you want to know what is going on with Revitalize Vermont, call Bryan!

In Vermont you must own a snowplow or know someone with a snowplow. The Lord blessed the Maleys with a used truck with a blade already installed and at a really good price. Recently they got 12 inches of snow overnight. No problem, right? They fired up the truck, began to plow, and then uh oh, the transmission shut everything down. Now what? Bryan started making calls. If you want get out of the driveway to get gas and groceries you have to clear the snow. He called the guy that clears the lot for the Irasburg church; he said he would come by and clear Maley's drive for \$20! Great!

He came as promised, cleared the drive, and went on to collect his \$20 never thinking that Bryan had prepared a question for him that opened the door of his heart. They engaged in a theological discussion regarding life, God, and the Bible. What was this question? It is one you can use yourself on an unsuspecting person who is just going through their day, stuck in the rut and routine of life. Here's the question. Oh, but before you use it, you have to prayerfully, and purposefully be prepared to think like Jesus with the woman at the well (John 4). Jesus was deliberate in having a conversation with this unsuspecting lost woman. He caught her off guard, because He cared enough to share the Truth. He wasn't offensive, He wasn't rude, and He prayerfully sought God for divine appointments! Before He started the conversation with her, he had already determined nothing was more important at that moment than her. "Life and The Schedule" was not going to interrupt their eternally significant conversation. (That's a big deal for us today friends). While He was connecting with her heart and spirit, the disciples came along and said, "Jesus, aren't you hungry? It is time to eat." (vs 31). Jesus says, "Not now guys, I have food to eat that you know not of," (vs 32) - "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish the work," (vs 34).

The truck transmission didn't just break down randomly; this was part of the Master's plan. God was creating work to get the plow guy (Evan), over to see the Christian guy (Bryan), so they could talk about something eternally important (Jesus)! This wasn't about plowing snow - THIS WAS ABOUT JESUS! We all have to think this way! This is just one way God is using Pastor Bryan to reach people. Initially, he committed to knocking on 1,100 doors in the first year, because that was a plan that seemed good at the time, but it wasn't feasible. Bryan is finding there is not enough time to knock on all the doors, because doing the work of an evangelist fills his schedule nearly every day. God brought Evan to Bryan's door. Why? Evan didn't realize it, but he was looking for someone to disciple him. Life had just pushed God to the back burner, but now he and Bryan are meeting regularly, and the sky is the limit.

What was Bryan's theological question? "How are you doing today?" You ask and need to listen for a real answer, not being satisfied with the typical "I'm Fine," "I'm good," or "Livin' the dream" response. It is culturally acceptable to hear that answer, give a smile, a nod, and then let life go on. That person could be empty and dead on the inside, and on the wide road that leads to a real eternal hell. Why answer the question honestly, and who would even care? Well, as the redeemed and appointed ambassadors for Christ, we should care! Listen for their heart (*out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*), express an interest in the person, and be deliberate to make your words count.

Bryan said Irasburg had nearly 60 people at services Sunday (February 9, 2020), a gathering that was struggling to reach 19 just a year ago. The Lord is blessing! Those in leadership shepherd the flock to **CONNECT** meaningfully and purposefully with one another. They are making the most of their time to **GROW** in the Word, which means groups meet

before church on Sunday morning in preparation for the service. It means different groups gathering throughout the week at the church building or in people's homes (Prayer Meeting, Young Adults, Youth Group, Small Groups, Counselling Sessions, Discipling Couples, and One by One). That grows into being united in **SERVING** with one another, looking for opportunities to stimulate one another to love and good works!

The black mold project in the Maleys' home is almost finished. This round of repairs should be around \$12,000 (total mold repair bill of \$17,000+). The Home Missions Panel would ask you to prayerfully give for this need. It was unbudgeted and unforeseen. The Maleys are personally paying for these needful repairs. At this time \$3,000 has been gifted. Praise the Lord!

The Maley's Support Level remains at approximately 68%, so there are plenty of opportunities to sign on as a regular supporter of the work that is marching forward. For the 1st quarter of 2020, there looks to be shortfall of \$5,000, that's approximately \$1,700 a month. Might YOU prayerfully consider being a financial supporter, as a family, or as a church? Pastor Bryan expressed that several one-time gifts have come in. What an encouragement and an answer to many prayers!

Please be praying for the Maleys: Pastor Bryan, Torri, Camden, Aubrey, Alex, and Roxy. Braiden is living in Michigan and is to be married in the spring of 2020.

- Upcoming birthdays in March: Camden will be 18 (3/21), Torri (3/30)
- Camden had all 4 wisdom teeth extracted Feb. 11th
- Our Pastors in Vermont: Irasburg- Scott Libby and Bryan Maley, Lamoille Valley- Ethan Kallberg
- Ethan's wife, Leah is due to deliver their 5th child April 2nd—a promised little boy!
- Pray for our fellowship of churches
- Pray for the Home Missions Panel as we meet together the week of March 9 in Ohio

**PLEASE SEND GIFTS AND SUPPORT TO:
GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH (REVITALIZE VERMONT)
PO BOX 217, GRIMES IA 50111**

FOREIGN MISSIONS

P. N. G. TEAM #1 - CRAIG AND SARA NOYES

A few weeks ago I was in the jungle helping some missionaries build their houses. On one memorable day, I was screwing freshly milled decking boards down when I became aware of the crowd of guys who had gathered around the porch watching me work. I turned to them and asked if anyone wanted to try using the drill. A nervous laughter moved through the little crowd as they looked at each other wondering if the other guy might do it. Finally, one young man stepped forward and apprehensively took the drill from my hand. Then turning towards the screw he stared at it with obvious confusion and just pointed the drill at it. My eyes got a little big and I thought, "Ok, I think these guys need a different starting point." We then began with how to hold the drill, and how to work the trigger, and went from there. Before too long several more wanted to try and they were quickly drilling away. That evening as I was lying in my hammock reflecting on that experience, this thought kept running through my head, "Oh, how I must learn to know nothing well!" Let me explain. In the very beginning as we were building the houses we are the experts. In most cases they have never used a drill, never been part of building a house like ours, and never thought about putting a toilet inside a house! However, pretty quickly the roles will change. The houses will be completed and the teacher becomes the student. We will go from being experienced, full-grown, and competent adults to people who don't know how to walk on a mountain trail, how to ask for food, how to start a fire, or virtually anything that your average 6-year old can do in the tribe with no problems! I'm not exaggerating! As I've visited tribes I've had older ladies hold my hand on a trail because it looks like I might fall down at any moment. We will know virtually nothing, and they must teach us the very basics of life. As in how the proverbial "trigger-on-a-drill" works. The first time I try to start a fire the way they do, I'm sure I'll look just like that guy pointing the drill at the screw with a blank and confused expression on my face. The thing is we'd better learn to know nothing as well as we can! We must embrace the position of being a "student" and not resent it. You see, we're not just learning culture, and language in these early years, we're teaching them, modeling for them how to start with zero understanding of something, and learn with humility. In Tok Pisin, we'd say we have to show them how to "sit down well" (gutpela sindaun). Why is that so

important? Because once again the tables will turn, the day will come when God is instructing us. Then we'll know how to talk, and how to walk. We'll know how and why they do what they do, what their hopes, and dreams are, how they see the world, and what stands in their way of understanding the Gospel. Then the day will come that we'll stand up in front of them and say, "All these years we've learned from you. We've stumbled, and cried. We have been pretty pathetic, so we can know your language. We promised we'd learn your language so we could share 'God's talk' with you." Next week, that begins. Then we'll start in Genesis, and lay the framework for a totally new worldview. The most fundamental pieces of how they see the world, and understand reality will be challenged. Their basic understanding of their identity will be brought into tension with what God says about who they are. For those who believe, they will then be challenged with what it means to truly love, to shower grace on their enemies instead of death, to deny themselves, honor others instead of self-honoring, and on and on. How will they know how to put off what they've always known about life, and start to embrace something so foreign? What will be their example? They will look to our lives, and all the years that we knew nothing. Did we fight the position of being a student? Did we constantly try to show off what we knew about life? Did we accept teaching or did we avoid that which was difficult? Did we seek out wisdom and knowledge from them, or did we stay away from things in which we were certain to fail in many times before we got it right? Our lives must serve as models of what it looks like to know nothing well. They will look and think about our lives. Will we have modeled what a disciple looks like, or will we have modeled what a man who is right in his own eyes looks like? Please pray for us! We have months before we even figure out what tribe we'll be going to. Please start praying now that we will learn to know nothing well.

Thank you for all your prayers and support. Life is hard work no matter where you live. Thanks for the time, energy, and resources you give of your busy lives to see this work go forward. Let's keep reaching out for the unreached!

In other news, our co-workers have all arrived in the country! Hurray! They are learning Tok Pisin. I am facilitating their language and culture learning, as well as managing the office, and logistics for our organization. All of us are prepping things for surveys and house building later in the year.

Please be praying for JOSH AND AUTUMN to orient well to the field. Please continue to pray for our families that we will keep growing in our walks with Him, trust Him for the results, and open doors in this ministry.

P.N.G. TEAM #2 - JOSH AND AUTUMN MILLER



It's been a busy, intense week for us as we officially jumped into language learning for Tok Pisin, the first of two languages that we'll need to learn here in PNG. Also, with the help of our teammates, we're trying to cultivate some relationships in a nearby village, which would help us understand not just how to speak Tok Pisin, but how to function in PNG culture! As one PNG man put it this week, "The city is just where people work. Life happens in the village." You can see a couple pictures of our visit to the village and other pictures from the past week. As always, thank you for praying for us! Both Josh and I are feeling some culture stress, and are missing some of the familiar things from back in the States. We're also totally at peace that we are right where God wants us!

Some pictures of Village Life shared by the Millers on Facebook:



In Photo #1 we showed up unannounced in this village, and they seemed welcoming and happy that we wanted to learn Tok Pisin. Generosity is highly valued in PNG, so by offering us kulau (coconut waters that you can see the young boys here husking in the first picture) and some other food like nuts, they were showing us honor and hospitality and letting us know we were welcomed. In Photo #2 our language helper Maria showed us how to make coconut milk in the PNG way. This type of culture events (some of which are planned, and some of which are unplanned) are helpful for us to learn vocabulary, and we also began to pick up on PNG culture, how people live, and what their everyday lives are like. In Photo #3 I wasn't nearly as good at scraping the coconut as Maria was, and I can assure you it is HARD work! In Photo #4 a young boy was excited to show us how they climb the tall buai trees. In Photo #5 a couple of the village guys offered to show us their beach. It was a bit of a walk through the jungle from their village.

We're hoping to go back next week. Please be praying with us that we can find and develop friendships with a couple individuals who really stand out as good potential on-going language helpers.

We'd love to hear from you! Send us an email: JoshAndAutumnMiller@gmail.com and let us know what you're curious about or if you have a question (or two) that we could answer in a future blog post or email.

"The Voice Newsletter" is the communication tool of the Conservative Grace Brethren Churches International; and edited by Pastors Ike Graham, Les Vnasdale, and Christopher Knight.

REGARDING NEWS ARTICLES AND/OR MAILING UPDATES:

Please forward all info to: Pam O'Kinsky at okinskys@comcast.net
Snail mail to 135 Wildcat Road, Friedens PA 15541

**** Articles are requested to be received by the 15th of the month to be included in the next month's issue of the Voice Newsletter****

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

