

networker

.....WORKING THE NETS FOR KINGDOM ADVANCEMENT



*A Message From
The Rev. Jim Barnes, National Minister*

Don't Let Maintenance Become Your Mission

At a recent seminar for church leaders, I heard a consultant say that **for every ten churches** that are at least one generation old (which means most churches in America other than recent church plants), **six are not interested in making any significant changes** to do more effective ministry. He then went on to say that in that sample of ten churches, **two would be willing to make changes** as long as the changes are “**cosmetic only**” and finally, there would be **two** out of those ten churches **that are willing to undertake real change**. Of the two in ten churches that want to make changes to be more effective in ministry, he concluded by pointing out that **only one succeeds**. That is some pretty scary math!

Now as I listened to this consultant outline some of the challenges facing churches that are struggling to more effectively impact the lives of people in our world today, I realized that one of the biggest problems facing many congregations is that they have allowed **maintenance to become their mission**. What do I mean by that?

A congregation that has allowed maintenance to become their mission is one that is **no longer looking outward** toward the people in their community who need Jesus and have, instead, started focusing the bulk of their attention and resources on whatever it is that constitutes “the church” in the minds of the members. Some of the signs that a church has made maintenance its mission might be when.....

- taking care of the church owned building and grounds is a higher priority in the minds of most members than reaching people for Christ



Welcome to the Association!

During the past several months the following churches, pastors and individuals have chosen to become new affiliates of the Evangelical Association:

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continued on page 2

Networker

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continued from page 1

- holding on to large amounts of money in the bank (to keep the building and grounds in good order) is viewed as more important than spending money on ministry and mission
- people believe the primary responsibility of the pastor is to take care of the members and their needs rather than leading and challenging the congregation to live out their calling as Christians to become and make disciples
- the members of the church generally ask, “what is the church doing for me?” rather than, “how is God calling me to serve in His Kingdom as I am part of His church?”
- leaders make their decisions with a focus on protecting and preserving the status quo rather than being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit guiding and directing the church toward more effective fulfillment of Jesus’ Great Commission to reach all people with the Gospel
- any desire to reach new people in the community or see the church grow is primarily motivated by a desire to “get new members” who will help increase the offering plate revenue to keep the church functioning as usual

Of course the problem with a congregation letting maintenance become their mission is that it **violates Jesus’ intention for His people**. All throughout the New Testament, Jesus reminds His followers that His mission is about lives being transformed as His followers consistently look outward and beyond themselves.

In his book *Giving Up*, David Rosenberry talks about the problem of churches that have drawn in on themselves - churches that have started to focus only on their own membership and the needs of their own families - churches that have dialed back giving to missions and curtailed efforts to reach out. Often times, these are churches that have pulled away from fellowship with other churches and have, in the process, become primarily focused inward. Rosenberry says, “The more the church looks in on itself, the less it can give of itself; the less it gives of itself, the less of itself there is to give.”

~ David Rosenberry

If a congregation has fallen into this trap of making maintenance their mission, then a radical shift in thinking is needed. Church leaders must be willing to risk challenging the congregation to refocus on a vision for the church that goes beyond simply maintaining an institutional version of the church.

As someone once asked, “What difference would it make to the people in your community if your church ceased to exist tomorrow?” If the answer is “none,” then it’s time to take a look at whether your congregation has become so inwardly focused that maintenance has become the church’s mission. If it has, then it’s time to let the Lord change you and give you His vision for your church’s future - and if you’re wondering how Jesus looks at the people who are outside of your church, consider these words: “*When He (Jesus) saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.’*” (Matthew 9: 36-38)

CONVOCATION 2017

Beck's Reformed Church, Lexington, North Carolina

“Let Light Shine Out of Darkness”

In September, people from all across the country gathered in Lexington, North Carolina for the 19th Annual Convocation of the Evangelical Association. This year the theme was “Let Light Shine Out of Darkness” based on the passage in II Corinthians 4:6 where the apostle Paul writes, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.”

The convocation opened on Friday afternoon with a presentation by Stan Hankins who is a full-time international evangelist based in Hawaii. Hankins offered a challenge to consider God’s desire to send workers into the harvest field and reminded Christians that in order to be effective in evangelism, believers must have a heart for the lost.

After a short break, Robby Dilmore, known as the “Christian Car Guy” for his nationally syndicated radio show, shared an inspirational account of his conversion from an unbelieving car dealer to a fully committed follower of Jesus. His testimony included a story of miraculous healing and kept the audience laughing as he injected his trademark humor.

Friday events concluded in the evening with a worship service and sermon by C.E. Holt of the Green Level Christian church in Burlington, North Carolina.

On Saturday, convocation continued with Clinton Faupel who is the executive director of RemedyLive, a unique ministry designed to reach the online generation. Through the creative use of technology, Faupel showed how ministry can be done with teens and young adults



“Let Light Shine Out of Darkness” was the theme of Convocation 2017 with images of the lighthouse all throughout Beck's Church

continued on page 4

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CONVOCATION 2017

Beck's Reformed Church, Lexington, North Carolina "Let Light Shine Out of Darkness"



Clinton Faupel shares powerful stories of the lives of teens and young adults saved through the ministry of RemedyLive

continued from page 3

using mobile devices, which is the preferred mode of communication for the next generation. He reminded listeners that God is alive and well in Silicon Valley as even Google has given his ministry free advertising as a way of furthering their mission to prevent teen suicide.

There were multiple workshop options on Saturday afternoon including a special visit from Sunny, a young believer from Myanmar who talked about what it is like to share Christ in a country that is primarily Buddhist. Sunny's own testimony of getting a visa to come to the United States for this event was miraculous. Eric Cox, a member of the EA Board led a workshop focusing on church planting and church multiplication, while Ron Shifley, another member of the Board held a



Pastors Ed Briggeman, Rich Dubbs and Steve Disher serve communion using chalices and plates from several different EA churches in North Carolina



Dr. Gary Hansen speaks about the prayers of the Reformers during Saturday night worship



Evangelist Stan Hankins challenges those gathered to have a heart for the lost and to become workers in God's harvest field



Pastor Dan and Jodie Hetherington are among many gathered to hear speakers at convocation

CONVOCATION 2017

Beck's Reformed Church, Lexington, North Carolina

"Let Light Shine Out of Darkness"

workshop on reintroducing the Biblical holidays in the life of the church. Other workshops touched on topics dealing with prayer, leadership and women in the Bible.

Saturday evening included a worship service featuring a combined choir and a powerful rendition of the great Reformation hymn "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Dr. Gary Neal Hansen spoke on the prayers of the great reformers of history and everyone gathered around the Lord's Table before departing.

On Sunday morning, convocation concluded with worship at Beck's Church with Jim Barnes, EA National Minister preaching. As is common at all convocations of the EA, great food and great fellowship was part of the entire event.



Robby Dilmore, the Christian Car Guy, shares his testimony



Youth worship team from Beck's church leading praise



Singing praises in the Beck's Church sanctuary



Members of the combined choir lead congregation in singing A Mighty Fortress



Pastor Ron Shifley leads workshop on reintroducing the Biblical holidays into the life of the church

**Is It Time for You
(or your Church)
to Join the
Evangelical Association?**

Affiliation with the EA is open to entire congregations as well as to individual pastors, students and lay people. Perhaps you've been reading and hearing about the EARCCC for a while, but you've never stepped across the line to actually affiliate with the association and become a part of the network. The EA is only as strong as those who choose to affiliate with us each year, so if you have never signed on, please visit our website at ~

www.evangelicalassociation.org

where you can download and print an application form. If you need to know more about the EA or if your church would like to have an informational presentation, please contact the national minister's office at ~

namin@evangelicalassociation.org
or **877-424-1472**.

Important Dates for Your Calendar

September 21-23, 2018 we will be going back to Texas where it all began. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Evangelical Association, our annual convocation will be held at First Protestant Church in New Braunfels, Texas (near San Antonio). We hope you will make plans to bring a group from your church for this special celebration!

The Spring Mid-Atlantic regional gathering of the Evangelical Association will be held on **Saturday, April 14, 2018** at Salem Reformed Church in Maugensville, Maryland.

The Spring North Carolina regional gathering of the Evangelical Association will be held on **Saturday, April 21, 2018** at Mount Hope Church in Salisbury, North Carolina.



We are saddened to learn that EA minstrel pianist & recording artist David McClintock has passed away unexpectedly. David has performed several times at EA National Convocation and in many of our churches around the country. We give thanks to God for David's passionate faith, gifted musical abilities and the ministry that he performed in worship with us through the years. Please lift up his family in your prayers during this time of mourning.

BULK COPIES OF THE NETWORKER ARE NOW AVAILABLE

If you would like a bulk shipment of ten copies of each edition of the Networker to make available to the members of your church, just contact the national office:

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or toll free at **877-424-1472**

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**Want to connect with other
EA members around the country?**

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& Congregational Christian Churches*
and check us out!!**

Ministry and Employment Opportunities

These churches and organizations are seeking to fill the following positions:

St. John's Evangelical Protestant Church

Cullman, AL
Minister of Music and Worship Arts
Full or part time

Salem Magley Church

Decatur, IN
Part-time Pastor

Zion Evangelical Church in Millstadt

Millstadt, IL
Part-time Director of Christian Education

St. Peter's Christian Community Church

New Albin, Iowa
Part-time Interim or Permanent Pastor

Grace Lower Stone Reformed Church

Near Rockwell, NC
Pastor

Pleasant Ridge Christian Church

Greensboro, NC
Part-time Youth Leader

Pilgrim Reformed Church

Lexington NC
Part-time Choir Director

Beck's Reformed Church

Lexington, NC
Full-time Senior Pastor

St. James Reformed Church

Mount Pleasant, NC
Full-time Pastor

St. Paul's Evangelical Church Trail Run

Small rural congregation near Sardis, OH
Part-time Pastor

Salem Evangelical and Reformed Church

Reamstown, PA
Part-time Worship Director (10-15 hours/week)

Salem Reformed Church

Bethel, PA
Part-time Pastor

Grace Reformed Church

Troxelville, PA
Part-time Pastor

AFRICA – Chingola, Zambia

Missionaries needed as Primary and Secondary School Teachers, Dorm Parents & Support Staff



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and employment opportunities,
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Evangelical Association

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