

networker

spring 2010

...working the nets for kingdom advancement

Message from the National Minister

The Rev. Jim Barnes, National Minister



Anticipating What Is Yet To Come: The Importance of Preaching, Teaching and Thinking About Heaven

*“For here we do not have an enduring city,
but we are looking for the city that is to come.” Hebrews 13:14*

If you had lived in ancient Rome during biblical times, you would have known that the power and might of the Roman Empire was something most people believed would endure forever. Such architectural masterpieces as the Coliseum, the Forum and the palatial houses and palaces of the Caesars led many to call Rome the “Eternal City.” In fact, there was even a saying repeated in those days that went like this:

*As long as the Coliseum stands, Rome shall stand.
When the Coliseum falls, Rome will fall.
When Rome falls, the world will fall.*

Of course, the ancient Roman Empire did eventually collapse, and yet the world did not follow. In fact, while many believed that the expansion of the imperial borders would never stop as Roman legions continued to advance, it was the early Christians who clearly understood that hope placed in a human civilization was ultimately futile. As Conyers has said, “The early Christians had seen that there is something eternal, something greater than life on earth, but it was not Rome. They had it engrafted into their hearts and minds that all earthly things must finally crumble and fall. What comes from nothing, returns to nothing. This perspective, though held only by a minority of the people in the Roman world, began a revolution in perspective toward time, life, death and eternity.”

My friends, as we journey through the season of Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter, we must be reminded once again that any hope placed in human ingenuity and the work of man is ultimately futile. Just as the early Christians recognized that their hope was in something far beyond the “glory of Rome,” we too must reclaim an eager sense of anticipation as we consider what God has prepared for us in eternity!

Too often modern day Christians get caught up in a *carpe diem* lifestyle. We simply “live for the day” without ever giving a second thought to what is yet to come. Our longings are often misplaced as we rely on science, technology, medicine and other human pursuits to give us “hope” for the future. This is not the purpose for which God designed us. Instead, the Lord wants His followers to make their way through this life with their eyes firmly fixed on what He has in store for us in eternity.

Several years ago I participated in the installation service of a pastor who was beginning his new ministry in a church of the German Evangelical tradition. The pastor’s father,

continued on page 2

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Summer 2010 Edition:

June 1, 2010

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September 1, 2010

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GREETINGS FROM THE EA PRESIDENT

The Rev. Bill Miller, President of the Board of Directors



On February 1st & 2nd the Board of Directors met in Corpus Christi, Texas. Outside it was dreary, windy and cool, but inside the winds of the Holy Spirit were sure at work! In addition to covering our usual business, a great deal of time was spent on upgrading our website and making plans for Convocation 2010.

The website issues are of particular importance because it is our main source of communication to those outside the EA. Plans were put into motion to relocate our host and to make it more “user friendly”. Many people have alerted us to issues of accessing the website and its forum. We hope that the game plan discussed at the meeting will solve our website problems.

Convocation 2010 will be held September 17th—19th at St. Thomas Church, Bernville, PA (near Reading, PA). The Board of Directors selected “**Not Ashamed**”, based on Romans 1:16 as the theme. The underlying scripture is “*I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. . . .*” With this theme in place the host Church can continue planning for the event. Registration materials will be mailed later in the Spring.

continued from page 1

himself a pastor in the Evangelical tradition, gave the message that day. In the sermon, he looked down from the pulpit at his son and said, “**No matter what you do in your ministry, always preach to your people about heaven.**” Over and over again, this older pastor instructed his son never to forget the importance of reminding his congregation of the hope of heaven. What made this sermon particularly memorable, is that the Evangelical pastor who gave that message to his son died not long after the installation service.

As twenty-first century believers, our faith can only be strengthened when we allow ourselves to live in daily anticipation of the possibility that Christ could return at any moment to usher in God’s eternal Kingdom in all of its fullness. The early Christians knew that this life is temporary and is but the precursor to what is yet to come. Consider these words of the apostle Paul:

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.” (II Corinthians 4: 16-18)

May our faith be strengthened as we all commit to living not for what is seen, but for what is unseen, for “this world, in its present form, is passing away.” (I Corinthians 7:31b)

HAITI EMERGENCY RELIEF

Have you been wondering how you and/or your church can *effectively* reach out to meet the needs of the people of Haiti? D.O.N.E. (Discipling Our Nations Effectively) is able to help you make an effective impact in Haiti through its partners in mission there.

D.O.N.E. is able to get a 20' High Cube container on the ground in Haiti for \$6,000. Each container is loaded with about 150,000 servings of rice, buckets/pails, blankets, and other donated goods.

Patrick R. Novak, D.Min., Ph.D., Senior Pastor of Church of the Valley in Santa Clara, CA (an Evangelical Association church) is President of the Board of D.O.N.E., as well as a member of the Board of the E. A. He is coordinating this outreach. The cost of \$6,000 covers the trucking costs of getting donated goods to TX, shipping to Haiti, and delivery to partners in Haiti who have been working there for over 40 years.

Churches and individuals can fund the entire cost of a container and smaller donations will be bundled together until the cost of a container is met. Any group funding the cost of a container will be sent pictures of the loading of the container in TX, as well as its delivery and distribution in Haiti.

Dr. Novak has recently learned that a publisher has donated over one million (1,000,000) children's text books and another donation of about three million (3,000,000) HandiWipes has been received. The cost of shipping and delivery of these goods in 40' High Cube containers is about \$11,000 per container. These resources will be distributed through Christian schools in the countryside. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Dr. Novak at: docnovak@aol.com.

Letters

We want to hear from our readers concerning the articles within the *networker*.

Send letters to:

EMAIL:

Office@bethelstpaul.org

POSTAL:

The Evangelical Association
c/o Bethel-St. Paul Church
4004 Shelbyville Road
Louisville, KY 40207
Attn: networker

Unsigned letters will not be accepted. Receipt of letter does not guarantee publication. Letters are edited for clarity and space.

Receive Your Networker Via E-Mail!

To sign-up, all you need to do is e-mail your name and e-mail address to~

office @bethelstpaul.org

You will begin receiving your *Networker* via e-mail with the next edition this summer.

PASTOR NEEDED

St. James Reformed Church is a traditional church located in Mt. Pleasant, North Carolina that was founded in 1894. We are members of the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches and are currently seeking a full time pastor. With a membership of 106, we maintain numerous functioning committees and have a growing number of youth and young families.

Our desire is to see entire families changed and growing in Christ and ultimately impacting another generation. Our mission is to: "Provide an environment for people to Worship the Lord, To share open Fellowship with each other, To Communicate their goals and needs, To Reach Out into the community helping others, and to be Stewards of the resources entrusted to us". If you find yourself in agreement with our mission statement and feel led by the Holy Spirit to become a part of St. James, please prayerfully consider sending a resume to us. You may direct any questions or concerns to a member of the Church and Ministry Committee (Courtney Troxler at ctroxler@rowan.org)

CHURCH OPENING

*Senior Minister, Jerusalem Church,
New Philadelphia, OH*

The Jerusalem Church of New Philadelphia, Ohio is a vital fellowship in Jesus Christ, established in 1815 in the Evangelical and Reformed tradition; maintaining a vibrant church-life throughout the many decades. It is an independent church of the Evangelical Association, consisting of 477 members.

The Senior Pastor should have the minimum a Bachelors Degree in Biblical or Ministry Studies (preferably a Master of Divinity Degree), a minimum of 6 years ministry experience, and should meet the requirements listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Interested candidates should send resumes to info@jerusalem-church.org, or call Fred Eichel at 330-339-5492.

MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL MEETING

Saturday, April 10, 2010

“Leadership Effectiveness Training”

St. Paul’s (Wolf’s) Church

near York, PA

9:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.

The format of the meeting will be different this year! “Lay Renewal Ministries” (LRM) will be offering “Leadership Effectiveness Training” for all Pastors and Laypeople. “Leadership Effectiveness Training” is designed to equip and introduce Church leaders to a new way of thinking about doing Church. It will provide Church leaders with a systematic, scriptural model for shaping their Churches to effectively accomplish God’s plan. A mailing for all Mid-Atlantic Churches will be out shortly, so watch your mail! For additional information/registration, contact St. Paul’s Church, 4501 Wolf’s Church Road, York, PA 17408; (717) 792-0731; wolfsecc@concast.net.

IMPACT 2010

THE MIDWEST REGIONAL GATHERING OF THE EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION

“Enlarging Our Vision, Expanding Our Possibilities, Encouraging Our Churches”

First Reformed Church

Bluffton, IN

Saturday, April 24, 2010

9:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.

featuring

Pastor Bob Russell, Retired Senior Minister, Southeast Christian Church

Pastor Jim Barnes, National Minister, Evangelical Association

OnceDeadTwiceBorn Drama Ministry of Bethel-St. Paul Church

For additional information/registration, contact Dr. Byron Bell; First Reformed Church,
301 W. Cherry Street, Bluffton, IN 46714; (260) 824-3161; pastorbbybell@gmail.com or
visit our website to download a full brochure ~ evangelicalassociation.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND SAVE THE DATE!

The 2010 Evangelical Association National Convocation!

September 17—19, 2010

Bernville, PA

(located northwest of Philadelphia)

The theme will be **“Not Ashamed!”** (Romans 1:16)

More information arriving in June.



EA PASTOR DEVELOPING NEW PARADIGM OF “CHURCH” IN OHIO

A new approach to doing “church” is underway in Spencerville, Ohio with the development of a new church start called “Merge.” The Rev. Ron Shifley and his wife, Deanna, are in the process of developing a new EA church plant in an unconventional way: building from a specific need for youth ministry.

The Shifleys will be developing “Merge” in conjunction with the re-launch of a teen outreach ministry called Catacombs. Catacombs was a successful Friday night, Christian teen night club ministry that Rev. Shifley co-founded and managed from 2003 to 2007. This outreach received regional newspaper and TV media coverage and helped connect Shifley with 100 un-churched teens annually. When Shifley left the UCC at the end of 2007, Catacombs ended soon after. Yet, Shifley did not leave the Spencerville area because he felt the Lord calling him to develop a new type of Christian community for people “living outside of stained glass windows”, with Catacombs as it’s central outreach ministry.

That vision is finally beginning to take shape as a planning team has formed to prepare to re-launch Catacombs by the end of 2010. A website (www.catacombonline.org) and Facebook group have already been developed for this ministry. The planning team is trying to raise funds to acquire a store front facility in downtown Spencerville to house Catacombs and more. Shifley envisions that the facility would host Catacombs on Friday nights, serve as the Worship Center for “Merge” on Sunday mornings, house a non-profit coffee house ministry called “Holy Grounds Café” weekdays, and provide space in the evenings for Bible study, children’s ministry, dart ball and more.

Once Catacombs is open, Shifley hopes that everything should fall into place to develop the congregation, with “Merge” launching public worship near Lent 2011. “Worship at Merge will be casual, contemporary and friendly. Hosting worship in a casual, coffee house atmosphere will help break down barriers that many people have about attending church, like dress code and the foreignness of traditional church settings. With Holy Grounds Café and Catacombs, inviting the public into the facility throughout the week, people will understand that our Worship Center is an inviting place where they can come as they are and mingle with friends and neighbors.”

The concept behind the church’s name, “Merge: a Living Faith Christian Community” is that the most important thing one can do in their life is to “merge with Jesus,” to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and make Him (*numero uno*) in one’s life. Shifley hopes that “Merge” will help people in the Spencerville area to merge their lives with Jesus, their marriages with Jesus, their families, their jobs, finances and dreams with Jesus.

Shifley notes that the dreams of “Merge” and Catacombs are beyond his scope of ability. “This has to be a God thing because I know that Deanna and I can’t do it alone. God is in charge of this project, not us.” Shifley states that wider church support is also needed to get “Merge” off the ground. “We need prayer warriors to stand in the gap for us. We need financial support to help acquire the facility and make renovations, and we will also need help from mission teams to come to Spencerville to assist with construction and community outreach projects. To learn more about the vision and plans for “Merge”, or to find out ways one can help out, check out: www.mergewithjesus.org/thecommunity.

Beyond the new church start, Ron and Deanna are actively involved with the Evangelical Association’s publishing ministries. The Shifleys served as co-editors of the EA’s 2009-2010 Desk Calendar and Ron serves on the EA’s national web ministry team.

CRISIS IN ATLANTA

The UCC Is Building A(nother) Fraudulent Case

Is the United Church of Christ the only remaining valid expression of the Congregational Church? Not by a long shot, yet that is the basis of a legal battle that is pending against a small congregation in an upscale suburb of Atlanta, GA.

Center Congregational occupies a modest brick building on the edge of Atlanta's Buckhead neighborhood, a district of mansions, megachurches and private schools. The sanctuary seats 100 people with an average worship attendance of 36. Center withdrew from the UCC in 2006 and joined the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. The UCC Southeastern Conference, however, learned that the property was owned by a trust—not the church—and that the terms of the trust were spelled out in a handwritten document from the 19th century. In 1895, Harriet Cox, the first pastor's mother-in-law, gave the congregation a quarter-acre of land to build a sanctuary. She stipulated that the plot be used "for church purposes of the Congregational Denomination." In its lawsuit, filed last year in Fulton County Superior Court, the conference claims that the UCC is the "Congregational Denomination" and thus Mrs. Cox's true heir. The complaint asks that Center be ejected from its premises and that the trustees—all of them are church members—be replaced by a single man: The Rev. Timothy Downs, chief administrator for the UCC's Southeastern Conference.

"The goal of the UCC/SECUCC is not acquiring our modest building and quarter acre of land (estimated value of \$500,000)," writes Center's pastor, The Rev. J.R. McAliley III, "their goal is legal 'ownership' of the designation as the true successor to the 'Congregational Denomination'."

In response, the Board of Directors of the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches discussed this issue at their semi-annual board meeting on February 1st in Corpus Christi, TX. The board instructed its President, the Rev. Bill Miller, to write an informational letter on Center's behalf indicating that the EARCCC and other groups continue to be valid expressions of what it means for congregational churches to associate with one another. The board also instructed that the EARCCC membership be notified of Center's battle with the UCC through the Networker.

The case has not yet come to a hearing. Right now, the small church is struggling under the weight of a huge legal debt of \$40,000. The church is requesting your prayers and any financial support you can send their way.

Their contact information is as follows: The Rev. J.R. McAliley III, Pastor; Center Congregational Church; 1055 Moores Mill Road NE; Atlanta, GA 30327-1627; (404) 351-2747 or (770-455-7526); JRMALILEYIII@netscape.net. **~Pastor Jeff Siems, Editor**

[Sources: A letter from The Rev. J.R. McAliley dated August 3, 2009; an article written by Jim Auchmutey titled, "A *Bully Pulpit*", published in the *Wall Street Journal*.]

IT'S RENEWAL TIME!

Renewal notices for 2010 have been mailed and e-mailed to all Evangelical Association affiliates. If you are currently affiliated with the EARCCC and have not yet renewed, please use the forms on page 7 to renew for 2010.

If you are not yet a part of the Evangelical Association, you are invited to explore this exciting new way to connect Christians in the twenty-first century. Feel free to contact Jim Barnes, National Minister, if you would like more information regarding how to establish your affiliation with the EARCCC. He can be reached (toll free) at 877-424-1472 or by e-mail at pastorjbb@gmail.com.

All forms can be mailed to ~

Evangelical Association
9051 Watson Road #241
St. Louis, Mo 63126

2010 PASTOR or INDIVIDUAL Renewal Form
Evangelical Association of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches
(PLEASE COPY THIS FORM FOR EACH PERSON RENEWING AND PRINT CLEARLY)

Be it known that I,

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Cell _____
E-mail _____
Name of your church/ministry _____
Address of your church/ministry _____

intend to maintain recognition in the Evangelical Assoc. of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches for the year 2010. I affirm the Purpose, Organization and Statement of Faith of the EARCCC.

Signature _____ Date _____

Support Enclosed (please make check payable to "Evangelical Association")
_____ Pastor (Ordained) \$60 _____ Additional support for General Fund
_____ Pastor (Licensed) \$60 _____ Additional support for National Minister Fund
_____ Individual (Lay Person) \$30 _____ Seminarian or Bible College Student \$60

_____ Check here if you DO NOT want to be listed in any directory or on the web site of the EARCCC.

Credentials will be issued following the receipt of this completed form and annual dues.

2010 CHURCH Renewal Form

Evangelical Association of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches
(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

Be it known that this church,

Name of Church _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Church Phone _____ Web Site _____
Contact Person _____ Contact Person Phone Number _____
Contact Person E-mail _____

intends to maintain recognition in the Evangelical Assoc. of Reformed & Congregational Christian Churches for the year 2010. We affirm the Purpose, Organization and Statement of Faith of the EARCCC.

Officer Signature _____ Date _____
Officer Printed Name _____ Title _____

Support Enclosed (please make check payable to "Evangelical Association")
_____ Church Dues (suggested minimum \$2 per member)
_____ Additional support for General Fund
_____ Additional support for National Minister Fund

_____ Check here if you DO NOT want your church to be listed in any directory or on the web site of the EARCCC.

Once the completed renewal form and payment of dues has been received, a certificate of membership will be issued.

Evangelical Association

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03/08

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National Minister

Evangelical Association
of the Reformed and Congregational
Christian Churches

**9051 Watson Road #241
St. Louis, MO 63126**

E-mail: pastorjbb@gmail.com

Networker

Email: office@bethelstpaul.org

Web

www.evangelicalassociation.org

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receiving the Networker Newsletter,
please tear off this
address page and return it to:

**Bethel St. Paul Church
4004 Shelbyville Road
Louisville, KY 40207**

EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION ONLINE

When people ask how to “connect” with their fellow believers in the EARCCC, the obvious answer is through face to face fellowship. Unfortunately, because the association is so spread out across the country, it is difficult for pastors and lay people to get together on a regular basis outside of occasional regional gatherings and the national convocation each year.

In the technologically advanced age in which we live, the Internet provides unique and effective ways through which an association like the EARCCC can function effectively. Here’s how you can currently have electronic “fellowship” with brothers and sisters in Christ in the association:

1. **Visit our web site (evangelicalassociation.org)** on a regular basis. Here you will find updates regarding what is happening across the association, listings of churches seeking pastors within the association as well as both news and inspirational articles gleaned from the newsletters of our affiliated churches each month. Additional changes to the site are planned over the next few months.
2. **Apply for membership in the online “forum”** on the EARCCC website where participants can start discussions and send messages to one another. (When you apply for the forum, please indicate whether you are a recognized pastor/layperson or a member of an EARCCC congregation.)
3. **Visit the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches on Facebook.** We now have both a “group” and a “page” set up. If you are a pastor/layperson with recognition in the association (or the member of a church with recognition in the EA) you are welcome to join the “group” (which is currently limited to those with active standing) and the “page.” If you are a “friend” of the EARCCC who has not yet applied for recognition or you belong to a congregation that is not part of the association, feel free to become a “fan” of the EARCCC page on Facebook.

See you in cyberspace!