



the Gospel and Our Culture

a network for encouraging the encounter in north america

In This Issue

Two new books in the Gospel and Our Culture Series are highlighted in this issue, telling of their forthcoming publication and offering an advanced look at the manuscripts (p. 1). One of these books, *StormFront*, is the focus for this year's GOCN consultation in October, announced on p. 12.

With books in mind, several other pieces are included. One is a short list of "Some Basic Literature" of the North American GOCN movement that has been used to acquaint people beyond North America with the ferment here (p. 10). Another is a notice from the Center for Parish Development about their 2003 Convocation scheduled for the end of July, which focuses on the themes of Phil Kenneson's book, *Life on the Vine* (p. 9). An online and CD research aid for the study of Lesslie Newbigin's work is unveiled on p.8.

Meanwhile, a couple of essays in this issue probe the way preaching takes shape in a church learning its way into missional identity and practices. Ed Searcy offers in brief the conclusions of his *Doctor of Ministry* work about the way he has found his preaching re-forming itself around "Seven Working Assumptions" (p. 3). A sermon by Matt Gunter illustrates some of those things in his own preaching, exploring how the meaning of the church's life becomes clear when it knows it is "Baptized into the Resistance" (p. 5).

— Editor

StormFront and Clay Jars

The Gospel and Our Culture Series Expands

George R. Hunsberger
GOCN
Holland, Michigan

By the end of 2003, two new volumes are due to appear in the personal passion about discerning the gospel's message and the resources

The charge to the group was to move beyond describing how the gospel functions with respect to the human cultures it meets and addresses, and how it functions as the basis for the Christian community's identity, and to tell what it is that the gospel says.

Gospel and Our Culture Series published on behalf of the GOCN by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. The volumes are the fruit of work done by GOCN research teams over the past five years, enabled by a grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc.

StormFront: The Good News of God was produced by a team commissioned to express the gospel as it addresses us in North America today. The team brought together their

of their respective experience and fields of scholarship: New Testament and systematic theology (Jim Brownson), ecclesiology and organizational theory (Inagrace Dietterich), philosophical theology and theological ethics (Barry Harvey), and social ethics and ecumenical mission (Charles West).

The charge to the group

StormFront

The Good News of God

by

James V. Brownson
Inagrace T. Dietterich
Barry A. Harvey
Charles C. West

with a Foreword by

George R. Hunsberger

Foreword

The Story that Chooses Us

- 1. Storm**
God Addresses the Spirit of the Age
- 2. Allegiance**
Participating in God's Intentions
- 3. Communion**
Dying and Rising with Jesus Christ
- 4. Power**
The Church and the Life of the World
- 5. Practices**
Reoriented in the Way of Christ

was to move beyond describing *how* the gospel functions with respect to the human cultures it meets and addresses, and *how* it functions as the basis for the Christian community's identity, and to tell *what* it is that the gospel says! By attempting to "hear the gospel again for the first time," what would they discern to be its accents, its angles of address to us who are formed by the particular culture (and cultures) of North America. This they have done, and this is what their manuscript attempts to communicate to adult learners in congregations for whom clarity about the good news is essential both for how they will live as the church and for how they will announce this news to neighbors.

One of the main motifs of the book is its accent on the way the gospel that Jesus heralded calls its hearers to participation, not acquisition, as their fundamental response. The book shows the trajectory of the gospel, as announced in the 'Gospels,' as one which gathers people into a discipleship that joins them to the purposes of God. This it views over against the North American consumerist habit of finding what the gospel offers that is in one's own best interest to receive. This is where the expressions of 'gospel' made by first

century Christian apostles and communities come into the sharpest of contrasts with the moods and instincts of contemporary North Americans. The church's tendency to accommodate its way of telling the gospel to the interests of acquisitional, consumerist people is brought face to face with the challenge to be further converted!

In the course of their work, the group found itself wrestling with a number of critical issues, among them the sometimes competing or conflicting traditions of public witness on the one hand and ecclesial practices on the other. In a sense, they carried forward a dialogue that has characterized the GOCN for some time, a dialogue between Reformed and Anabaptist traditions for understanding the church and its mission. Some of the lines of tension felt in the course of the team's work have undoubtedly remained in the resulting manuscript, but the commitment of the group has been to own the whole of the book as their combined work rather than assigning individual authorship to chapters. This exhibits something of the group's experience of grasping both public witness and ecclesial practices together in a vision made more whole in the process.

Treasure in Clay Jars grew out of a different set of questions. When the book *Missional Church* was published in 1998, it quickly connected with people who had felt the

continued on page 4

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Seven Working Assumptions for Preaching in a Missional Church

Edwin Searcy
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What difference is there in preaching for a missional church? The congregation I serve notices that my preaching has changed. But what has changed? It is not simply the way in which these sermons are constructed. The change has less to do with technique (with ‘how to’) than it does with the intent (with ‘what for’) of this preaching. I am coming to the conclusion that the biggest difference in preaching for a missional church rests in the assumptions that are made by preachers facing this new context. Missional preaching is not a new method of preaching. Missional preaching is a different genre of preaching (within which a variety of methods and styles may be faithfully employed). Once the preacher and congregation change their operative assumptions about the purpose of the sermon and the role of the preacher, everything about the occasion of preaching shifts. The following seven working assumptions currently govern every sermon that I preach. And, according to the testimony of the congregation, this changed preaching accounts for significant change within our life together at University Hill Congregation.

1. The once mainline church finds itself in a new location in North American culture. Now each congregation is called not to send missionaries beyond but to be a missionary people here. This *missional* context requires a new genre of speech in the pulpit that reframes the mission of the church within the “*missio dei*” (mission of God). Dying to the categories of mission that have long been dominant is a painful ending of old ways and assumptions. Conversion to the gospel begins within the church and its preachers. Coming to trust that YHWH (“*I am what I am up to*” - Exodus 3:14) is saving creation (including the church) is at the heart of this wilderness pilgrimage.

2. In its new location on the margins of acceptability the now sidelined church rediscovers the devalued language of *testimony*. The pulpit becomes a witness box, the congregation a jury and the preacher a daring witness (Greek: ‘*martyr*’, Latin: ‘*testis*’ - risking life & progeny) to the confounding truth that YHWH is engaged in a redemptive mission of cosmic proportions in Christ. The preacher’s voice is now filled with the unmistakable urgency, risk and passion of one giving dangerous testimony to the activity of God that otherwise goes unspoken. The church gathers to hear the truth and nothing but the truth about its living witness as a sign of the kingdom of God.

3. In this genre of preaching the preacher proclaims the truth of an alternative way of figuring things out. The cruciform pattern of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday provides the coherent narrative that is rehearsed in sermon, in liturgy and in all aspects of the congregation’s life together. This movement from aching loss (Friday) through forsaken absence (Saturday) to astonishing newness (Sunday) stands in stark contrast to the dominant figural narratives provided by a culture of satiation and self-reliant success. In other words, the church’s testimony is pre-figured. The *figural* preacher is like a figure skater whose sermons are practised movements through the patterned figure (or ‘type’) of the cross.

4. In giving their testimony, preachers in a missional context move from the practice of translation and illustration to a practice of language *immersion* in a different language world (note Ephesians 4:20 - “*the way you learned Christ*”). Translators give priority to relevance, seeking to correlate meaning from the biblical text with the categories of contemporary culture. Immersion preachers, on the other hand, assume that human experience and ‘common sense’ is inevitably rooted (from the Latin: ‘*radix*’ - root, thus ‘radical’) in particular narratives that lead to peculiar ways of speaking and radically different ways of living. Immersion preachers give priority to the oddness of the biblical narrative so that the church sees the ways in which contemporary living is irrelevant in light of the ways of God revealed in Christ.

5. Sermons that seek to immerse the church in the peculiar logic of the biblical narrative are disciplined attempts to stand under (to *understand*) - not over - the texts that provide its sustaining memory. Preachers who adopt this stance live as hosts who provide hospitality to the strangeness of texts that confound and trouble. Instead of working to resolve and ‘find meaning’ in these texts, sermons in this genre intend to give these ancient strangers a living voice. Text by text, the church learns its radical ways of speaking about and to the God met in Jesus Christ.

6. Learning Christ is a communal activity. Yet in an individualistic age we regularly imagine that the church is essentially a gathering of individuals and forget that it is inherently a *communal disciple*. Preaching in a missional context makes the fundamental assumption that the “you” it addresses is primarily plural (“y’all”). These sermons are preached to the church as a single body, rather than to individual circumstances. This preaching assumes that the gospel for individuals is about becoming a member of the Body of Christ. Every sermon in this mode intends to build up the congregation (gathered and dispersed) as a disciple

of Jesus in its own right.

7. The North American church's move from centrality in culture (where its role was maintenance of core, foundational values) to a marginalized location involves a massive shift of identity. Now the church learns and rediscovers *practices* that keep alive an alternative memory and way of being. In this it learns from ancient Israel's exile and the long Jewish history of life in the Diaspora. The church is a movement that resists the corrosive effects of the powers and principalities that strangle hope and birth despair. Preaching is one of the crucial practices in which even the church's own resistance to the gospel is addressed. Then the church turns to the One who is the source of the power to reject the idols that masquerade as life eternal but that

lead, instead, to death. In this turn the church stewards five marks of faithful witness to God's mission in the world: *kerygma* (proclaiming); *didache* (teaching); *koinonia* (fellowship and community in Christ); *diakonia* (serving); and *liturgia* (worshipping).

Suggested resources:

Brueggemann, Walter. *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles* (Westminster/John Knox, 1997)
Campbell, Charles L. *Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei's Postliberal Theology* (Eerdmans, 1997).
Guder, Darrell, ed. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Eerdmans, 1998).

StormFront and Clay Jars

continued from page 2

inner stirrings that something was wrong and firmer roots in a biblical-theological vision were necessary. It put to words what many had been feeling. Yet, for many people who connected with the vision *Missional Church* articulated, they had not seen it in practice anywhere. So they had little to go on when it came to imagining themselves moving in those directions, much as they wanted to.

A research team was formed that included a new church developer, a congregational teacher, a church consultant, and several theological educators whose work combined pastoral experience with scholarship in fields

such as missiology, theology, biblical studies, anthropology and church history. Under the leadership of Wally Hobbs, they set out to discover and explore congregations whose lives gave tangible demonstration of the dynamics implicated by the *Missional Church* vision. That meant first developing a clear idea of what they were looking for. What would be true of churches shaped by a missional understanding of themselves? How would you know a missional church when you saw it? A list of twelve indicators was formed (which are included in an Appendix on methodology in the book), and on that basis the team searched for

Treasure in Clay Jars
Patterns in
Missional Faithfulness

Lois Y. Barrett, Editor
Walter C. Hobbs, Project Leader
Darrell L. Guder
George R. Hunsberger
Linford L. Stutzman
Jeff Van Kooten
Dale A. Ziemer

“So We Do Not Lose Heart”

Congregational Sketches

- Pattern 1: Discerning Missional Vocation
- Pattern 2: Biblical Formation and Discipleship
- Pattern 3: Taking Risks as a Contrast
Community
- Pattern 4: Practices That Demonstrate God's
Intent for the World
- Pattern 5: The Public Witness of Worship
- Pattern 6: Dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Pattern 7: Pointing Toward the Reign of God
- Pattern 8: Missional Authority

Embodying and Proclaiming the Gospel

Appendix: Methodology

congregations showing signs of those features.

Once selected, the fourteen congregations (six of them explored as a cluster of fellow-traveling congregations) were contacted, visited, interviewed, and watched to discern the stories and experiences and practices that made their missional character especially evident. The congregations ran the gamut from Roman Catholic to Mennonite, Reformed to Charismatic, Baptist to Methodist. Most were Anglo-American, but there was a Hispanic parish and an African-American congregation among them as well.

Reflecting on their explorations in these congregations, the team tested the initial list of indicators. It found that some of them were so closely associated that they were really a part of the same thing. They also found that there were some recurring dynamics that had not been so clearly focused by the list. What emerged in the end was a series of eight “patterns in missional faithfulness.”

The book describes these congregations and the way they illustrate these patterns, but none of the churches is held up as *the* model that all should follow. The research

confirmed quite the contrary. The presence of these patterns is variable in each place. There are ambiguities each congregation would acknowledge about their own practice of the patterns. Some patterns are stronger in some churches and weaker in others. Even in their greatest strengths, the specific form in which the patterns are evident is so particular to their context, their own identity as a community, and their gifts and callings from God, that a simple transfer of models from any of these churches to any other church works against the grain of a rooted, contextual missional presence to which every church is called, and of the vision that expects to see each church marked by the Holy Spirit with a particular ‘charism’—the presence of a particular mix of gifts and callings that makes it a unique gift of God to the place where it has been planted. All of this led the team to the image of 2 Corinthians 4—in recognition that always and everywhere, churches are jars of clay bearing a treasure of inestimable value! ■

Pre-publication Copies Available

The GOCN has negotiated with Eerdmans to prepare pre-publication printings of these two new manuscripts. These are expected to be ready by August, 2003. Groups interested in engaging either or both of these texts before their actual publication are invited to contact Judy Bos at the GOCN office (judy.bos@westernsem.edu). The price for pre-publication copies will be minimal. For either book, pre-purchase of the final published version may be combined with the purchase of the pre-publication version, at a special discounted price.

Baptized into the Resistance

Matt Gunter

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church

Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Year C, 1 Epiphany, 1/7/01, St. Barnabas
Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 89:20-29 (or 89:1-29),
Acts 10:34-38, Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

On an August morning in 1942, three buses rumbled up the road to the French mountain village of La Chambon. The buses were accompanied by police cars, police who were sent to gather up Jews into the buses and take them back to concentration camps. The officials knew that the village of La Chambon was a major hiding place and way station for Jews seeking to escape the Holocaust. When they arrived, the leader of the police asked to speak with Pastor Andre Trocme who was the spiritual leader of the village.

The policeman went to Pastor Trocme and asked, “Are you hiding Jews in this village?”

Pastor Trocme, committed to truth-telling, responded,

“Yes.”

The policeman ordered, “Give us their names.”

Pastor Trocme replied, “To be honest, I don’t know their names.”

“Show me where they are,” the policeman insisted.

Pastor Trocme said, “No, I won’t do that. They are my brothers, and I am commanded by my Lord to love my neighbor.”

The police then searched the village. They were unable to find any Jews or anyone who would identify a Jew. They left in frustration, warning Pastor Trocme and the others that they would be watching and that they would be back.

The story of Pastor Trocme and the village LaChambon is very inspiring. You can read about it in the book *Lest Innocent Blood be Shed*. It’s an interesting story because, in the midst of a world gone mad, in the midst of the darkness of the Nazi terror that engulfed

Europe, this village chose to go against the darkness. These people risked much to save human lives. They knew that they were risking a lot. To be caught harboring Jews, or helping them to escape, not only put your own life or livelihood at risk but the lives and livelihood of all your family. Even children of rescuers were often sent to concentration camps. If you wanted to be the friend of Jews, you could share their fate. It was all the same to the Nazis. The villagers of La Chambon believed it was a risk worth taking.

What I find interesting in that is that the adults of La Chambon, and other adults throughout Europe who chose to rescue Jews, did not ask the children of their families if they wanted to have their lives risked to save Jews. The adults did what they knew was right. They risked the lives of their children because they would rather have their children's lives risked for what is right than keep them safe, accommodating themselves to the darkness and evil.

I think about La Chambon whenever we have baptisms—especially when we baptize infants. In the morning we bring Tamara and Grace to be baptized. Neither of them is choosing to take this on anymore than the children of La Chambon chose to have Jews in their homes. But the parents of these two girls believe that what they are bringing them into is too important not to bring them into it.

There are, of course, churches that only baptize people who are old enough to choose for themselves. But, from its earliest days, the church, for the most part, has believed that part of what baptism is about is bringing everyone in the biological family into the bigger faith family. We do not wait to teach our children what is right and what is wrong. Nor do we wait to incorporate them into the body of Christ.

I find it curious sometimes when you come across people who say that

they are going to let their children make their own decisions about faith. Those same people don't let their children make their own decisions about whether or not they are going to tell the truth when they are children. They do not let their children make their own decisions about whether or not they are going to go to kindergarten. They do not let their children make their own decisions about whether they will have dessert before or after dinner. They do not let their children make their own decisions about whether or

When people say, "We're going to let our children make their own decisions about faith," what they have already done is decide for them that faith is not really that important or to be taken all that seriously.

not they will play with electric sockets. When they say, "We're going to let our children make their own decisions about faith," what they have already done is decide for them that faith is not really that important or to be taken all that seriously. It's not really that different from the opposite attitude which I have also heard. Adults in a church that we belonged to once said, "We don't really believe much of this stuff, but we thought the children ought to be exposed." Rather like exposing them to chickenpox, I guess. The problem is you grow up vaccinated against any real faith. Children inevitably pick up what is fundamentally important to their parents.

We believe we are a body, not just an assembly of individuals who have chosen to believe a certain way. We are a body into which each of us has been engrafted. It is that body to which we engraft Tamara and Grace today. Jesus, in this morning's gospel, was baptized and anointed

with the Holy Spirit. It is the beginning of his mission, the mission for which he was born. In Acts, that mission is described. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power, so that he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And he was preaching peace. In baptism, we unite ourselves, or in this case our children, to Christ and to his mission. We unite ourselves also to his body, the body of the church which is called to fulfill that mission to be Christ's body in the world, to be light in the darkness as La Chambon was light in the darkness.

Tamara and Grace have not been around long enough to be guilty of very many sins. But each of them has been born into the mess that we humans have made of the world.

The world has been stained by our own willfulness, our own selfishness, our own violence. And they are born into that mess, into that stained situation. This morning we baptize them and unite them in the baptism of Christ, washing away that initial stain, claiming them for the community of the Light. The church, called to be a resistance movement, is very similar to the resistance movement in Nazi Europe. Our situation is not as dramatic as that, the hate and violence is not as overt, yet there is still plenty of violence, plenty of hatred, plenty of selfishness to resist. We are not asking Tamara and Grace if they want to be a part of the resistance movement. We believe the resistance movement is too important for them not to be a part of, not to be raised in, not to be shaped by. I suppose they have the option, at some date, to decide they don't want to be a part of this movement, but for now we are claiming them. We are drafting them to join us in that movement, to follow Christ, to be united with him, to be empowered by his Spirit, to be the light of the world.

I'd like you to take out a prayer

book for a moment and turn to page 302. The sponsors, parents and godparents, of Grace and Tamara will be saying these lines in a bit, but I want to point them out and invite you all to say them or respond to them now. There is on page 302, on the second half of the page, what are called the Renunciations and the Adhesions. The Renunciations are those things that we renounce as Christians. The Adhesions, as with tape, are the things to which we cling. Please respond after each question. Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God? (*I renounce them*). Do you renounce the evil powers of this world, which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God? (*I renounce them*). Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God? (*I renounce them*). Those are the renunciations. Next are the adhesions. In the early church and, I think, in some of the Eastern churches still, during the renunciations, the people who are about to be baptized or their sponsors faced west because west is the direction of sunset, the direction of night, and hence, symbolically, the direction of darkness and evil. Then as the priest continued, “Do you turn . . .” the people would physically turn from west to east. East is the direction of sunrise, the direction of daylight, the direction, symbolically, of resurrection and new life. So there would be a very physical turning. St. Barnabas is not laid out well for that because west is this way (towards the altar) and from the baptismal font it doesn’t work very well to be facing the altar and the cross and saying, “I renounce them,” and then turning to the outside and saying, “I do.” But in our hearts we make this turn. Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your savior? (*I do*). Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love? (*I do*). Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord? (*I do*). You have all been reinducted into the resistance.

In a bit, we are going to renew our baptismal vows, and I want you to turn to page 304 in preparation for that. The beginning of the Baptismal Covenant is the Apostles’ Creed, laid out as three questions and their responses. Following that there are some questions about how we commit ourselves to behave because of what we claim to believe. Beliefs lead to actions. You don’t need to answer these right now because you’ll be doing that shortly, but I want to look at those questions at the bottom of page 304. “Will you continue in the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship in the breaking of bread and in the prayers?” The response is, “I will, with God’s help.” You can’t do this on your own. That first question points out that we are a body. We are to continue in the fellowship because it is only in the body, in the community, that we can be supported and sustained to be light in the world, to participate in the mission of Christ. It is in gathering to break bread in the Eucharist that we are nourished for that mission.

The next question is, “Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin repent and return to the Lord?” I appreciate the honesty. It does not say if you fall, but when you fall. You *will* fall. We will all fall, we will

all falter at some point in our resolve to follow Jesus and resist the evil in the world and in us. But the first and last word for Christians is grace and when we repent and return to the Lord, we are assured of his mercy.

Then, at the top of page 305 is, “Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?” Good news is for sharing. We have been given a great gift in receiving the grace of God and being included in his ministry of reconciliation. We are called not to hoard that gift but generously to share it and invite others to join us in this great movement.

The fourth question is, “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?” That one sounds simple and straightforward. That is until you come up against real neighbors who are not all that easy to love. We are invited and challenged to allow the Spirit of Christ to work in us such that his love overflows, spilling out of our lives into the lives of those around us – indiscriminately. There is certainly no room for things like racism in this movement. We are invited to see each encounter with another human being as an encounter with Christ.

The last question is, “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” This one builds on the one before. The love of Christ is not only personal it is also social. Justice and peace are the hallmarks of God’s kingdom. Again, we are invited and challenged to seek justice and peace here and now even as we await their fullness in God’s kingdom.

These are the kinds of behaviors we believe we are called to as followers of Jesus Christ. It is into a community characterized by such behaviors that we are baptizing Grace and Tamara. That is what we mean when we will say a little later to them both, “We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.” It was behaviors like these that characterized the villagers of La Chambon. Though we do not live in a time or place where evil and darkness seem as clear as they do when we look back at Nazi-occupied Europe, there is still plenty of evil and darkness to be resisted. We are called to follow Jesus in his resistance movement. It is into that resistance movement that we are now going to baptize Grace and Tamara. ■



Newbigin.Net

Bibliography and Document Archive

A coalition of networks and scholars has announced the inauguration of a website and a companion CD to aid research into the writings of Lesslie Newbigin. The website, at www.newbigin.net, contains a comprehensive, fully searchable bibliography of Newbigin's works, published and unpublished. With it is an extensive bibliography of interactions with his thought by others. The bibliographic notations are fully searchable by author, date, title and keyword. In the case of over 200 of Newbigin's essays and a dozen of his books, the actual texts are available online in PDF format.

Now, a **CD-Rom** has been produced that offers further enhancements to the power of the research data. It incorporates askSam, a free-form database software program, making it possible to search for words and phrases across the comprehensive

bibliography as well as all of the texts, which are included in both data-searchable and PDF formats. The CD also enables extensive study without consuming internet time, especially where that is limited or expensive.

These online and CD research aids are the fruit of a joint effort by the GOCN-UK, the GOCN-NA, and DeepSight Trust (New Zealand), with the aid of a financial grant by the Council for World Mission. The project has enjoyed the cooperation of the Newbigin Estate, the assistance of a number of Newbigin scholars, and the generosity of many publishers.

The CD is now available for purchase at the GOCN office for a special introductory price of US\$30. To order, contact Judy Bos at judy.bos@westernsem.edu. ■



*A vital resource for those
studying theology,
mission, the Church,
Christian unity,
inter-faith encounter,
and mission
within Western culture!*

A Memo to the GOCN constituency –

Dale Ziemer
Center for Parish Development
Chicago, Illinois

LIVING MISSIONALLY: BEARING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT in a Culture of Fear, Distrust, and Greed.

July 29-31, 2003. (Optional follow-up workshops July 31-Aug. 2).

Sponsored by the Center for Parish Development.

Location: The Cenacle Retreat and Conference Center, Chicago.

For more information and registration: 773-752-1596 fax: 773-752-5093.

Or go to the website: www.missionalchurch.org.

God is calling forth a people for God's mission in North America. How is the church today to perceive, celebrate, and participate anew in God's mission?

LIVING MISSIONALLY is the theme of the 2003 Convocation sponsored by the Center for Parish Development to help churches and their leaders on a missional church journey. This Convocation has been designed for church leaders to discover resources and support for bearing the fruit of the Spirit in today's challenging cultural context.

This year's convocation will focus around four themes for living missionally:

Paying attention to the world —The missional community does not exist for itself, but for the world in which God is at work. It develops skills for discovering, interpreting, and purposefully engaging the cultural patterns, beliefs, and values that are shaping it.

Paying attention to the Spirit —The Holy Spirit is the active missionary who calls, forms, and empowers the church to participate in God's mission. Through biblical study the worshipping community is transformed by the Spirit to perceive, think, and behave as the People of God.

Paying attention to one another —The integrity of the church's witness is formed and transformed by the nature and expression of its common life. The missional commu-

nity develops and sustains rich practices of "one-anothering" – joining and sharing, eating and drinking, listening and caring, testing and deciding, welcoming and befriending."

Paying attention to change —The missional church is one that is on a "journey toward," always seeking to learn and be open to change. Leaders cultivate readiness for significant spiritual renewal, building commitment to the major changes that are required.

The featured speaker is Dr. Philip D. Kenneson, Associate Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Milligan College.¹ Dr. Kenneson combines rich, theologically grounded reflection on Christian life and practice with insightful cultural analysis. Contributing to the areas of biblical and theological study, spirituality, and cultural criticism, he offers practical guidance for Christian discipleship in today's world.

This convocation is a way to cultivate your own missional sensitivities and meet others with whom you can link arms on the journey of transformation and hope.

¹ His books include, *Life on the Vine: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit in Christian Community*; *Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World*; and *Selling Out the Church: The Dangers of Church Marketing*. ■



Some Basic Literature of the North American Movement

George R. Hunsberger
GOCN Coordinator
Holland, Michigan

During the last year and a half, I have had the opportunity to visit with people in several other countries where there is a great deal of interest in traveling alongside of us in the North American GOCN. In places such as Germany, England, Scotland, and South Africa, people are eager to know more about the conversations that have emerged for us here and are looking for published materials emerging within and from our North American network. That is the origin of this shortlist of books that have been published over the past decade—not nearly exhaustive, but fairly representative of the lines along which the ferment among us has shown up.

Barrett, Lois Y., ed.

2002 *Mission-Focused Congregations: A Bible Study*. Scottsdale, PA: Faith & Life Resources, Mennonite Publishing House

2004 *Treasure in Clay Jars: Patterns in Missional Faithfulness*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. (Forthcoming)

Bevans, Stephen B., SVD

2002 *Models of Contextual Theology*. Revised and Expanded Edition. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Brownson, James V.

1998 *Speaking the Truth in Love: New Testament Resources for a Missional Hermeneutic*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Brownson, James V., Inagrace T. Dietterich, Barry A. Harvey, and Charles C. West

2003 *Stormfront: The Good News of God*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. (Forthcoming)

Burce, Jerome E.

2000 *The Magnet and the Vial: How the Church Achieves its Purpose in a Culture of Doubt*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Dawn, Marva J.

2001 *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Guder, Darrell L.

1999 *The Incarnation and the Church's Witness*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

2000 *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2002 *Unlikely Ambassadors: Clay Jar Christians in God's Service*. Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Guder, Darrell L., et al.

1998 *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Hunsberger, George R.

1998 *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Hunsberger, George R. and Craig Van Gelder, eds.

- 1996 *The Church Between Gospel and Culture: The Emerging Mission in North America*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Hall, Douglas John.

- 1997 *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Harvey, Barry A.

- 1999 *Another City: An Ecclesiological Primer for a Post Christian World*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Hiebert, Paul G.

- 1999 *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Kenneson, Philip.

- 1999 *Beyond Sectarianism: Re-Imagining Church and World*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

- 1999 *Life on the Vine: Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit in Christian Community*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Leddy, Mary Jo

- 2002 *Radical Gratitude*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Roxburgh, Alan J.

- 1997 *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Schwab, A. Wayne

- 2002 *When the Members are the Missionaries: An Extraordinary Calling for Ordinary People*. Essex, NY: Member Mission Press.

Shenk, Wilbert R.

- 1995 *Write the Vision: The Church Renewed*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

Van Gelder, Craig

- 2000 *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Van Gelder, Craig, ed.

- 1999 *Confident Witness-Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Warren, Michael

- 1999 *At This Time In This Place: The Spirit Embodied in the Local Assembly*. Harrisburg, PA; Trinity Press International.

West, Charles C.

- 1999 *Power, Truth, and Community in Modern Culture*. Christian Mission and Modern Culture Series. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

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Churches Living the StormFront

*The 2003 GOCN Consultation
October 16-18, 2003
Techy Towers, Techy, Illinois*

This year's annual GOCN Consultation will focus on the new book, *StormFront: The Good News of God*, due to be published by early October. The book states Gospel—the good news of God that addresses us in North America today, in all its unsettling comfort and reassuring challenge. The consultation will explore how this book and its message may be useful in the life of the church. How might it introduce people to the Christian faith? How might it assist processes of catechesis and spiritual formation? What role might it have for the congregation's self-understanding as a people birthed by this gospel? By what means may any or all of these possibilities be focused by our collective imagination, and enabled by collaborative efforts we choose to

pursue?

The consultation will approach these questions through the eyes of the local congregation. Groups are being formed in several congregations to focus what's at stake when the themes of the book are taken to heart. Their focused reflections will be the primary presentation material of the consultation, opening for the whole consultation a fruitful conversation with authors of the book, a head start for small group engagement, and a map for creating useful responses to the challenges.

The full details of the consultation will be available in August, 2003 on the GOCN website or by request from Judy Bos at the GOCN office. ■