



THE CONNECTION

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE

BRETHREN IN CHRIST CORE VALUE # 6: *WITNESSING TO THE WORLD* “WE VALUE AN ACTIVE AND LOVING WITNESS FOR CHRIST TO ALL PEOPLE.”

APRIL
&
MAY
2009

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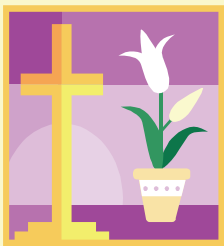
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Lloyd Ogilvie remembers the time he was introduced as a guest speaker. “This morning it is my profound pleasure to introduce to you an outstanding man of great eloquence and moral excellence. His ministry is unparalleled.” Ogilvie was squirming under the pressure of unrealistic expectations. The introduction went on: “His work has changed the world. He is a sensational man of God whose spellbinding words will capture your attention instantly. His name is Jesus Christ, and here to introduce him is Lloyd Ogilvie.” Yes, we would expect the pastor’s job is to convincingly share the Good News of Jesus Christ in such a way that people respond, Believe and receive Jesus Christ. That’s evangelism. Whose job is evangelism? In a survey, 90% of the people said it’s the pastor’s job. In another survey pastors were asked, “Who is supposed to do evangelism?” 90% of the pastors said it’s the congregation’s job! Why do 90% of people in church want to pass off evangelism to someone else? Mark Mittleberg writes in Becoming a Contagious Christian, “There’s nothing like the adventure of being used by God to contagiously spread His love, truth, and life to other people. Evangelism is the one thing we can do on earth that we can’t do in heaven. It’s only here and now that we can fulfill Christ’s mandate to reach lost people with the life-changing message of the gospel.” Sounds pretty exciting!

That’s why “Witnessing to the World” is a central Core Value for us and we begin with seekers. Interestingly, God is the prime seeker! Before any of us ever sought God, God was seeking us. (Ezekiel 34:11) “For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.” C. S. Lewis writes, “I never had the experience of looking for God. It was the other way around. He was the hunter... He stalked me, took unerring aim, and fired. One might think I had no choice in the matter. But...I wonder if it was not the freest thing I’ve ever done or that He did.” The point is, God is a seeking God, and He calls us to partner with Him in seeking the lost.

There is a cosmic struggle over every person on the planet! (Ephesians 6:12ff) So, first we pray. Yet, I am challenged by this quote by Adrian Rodgers, “We spend more time praying for the saved who are sick than for the unsaved who are lost...more time trying to keep the saints out of heaven than the lost out of hell.” However, focused, passionate prayer over time results in a desire, almost a compulsion to “God being my helper”, I will do something to be a witness to this person for Christ. So God works on our lifestyle from the inside out, preparing us to “give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have...with gentleness and respect.” (I Peter 3: 15)

While it is true, God could do a much better job than you or me, he has for reasons not fully disclosed, chosen us as His partners in witnessing! We have different gifts and styles. According to the Becoming a Contagious Christian resource, some people are quite **confrontational**. Almost shouting, “Are you saved? If not, you’re going to hell!” Others spend long hours quietly reasoning with a skeptic about the **intellectual** reason for faith in Christ. It makes sense to follow Jesus. Still others just build interpersonal **relationships** with neighbors, with associates at work, sharing coffee with acquaintances, building friendship and at just the right time, they share about Jesus. Some simply **invite** friends to church, which is very effective—like Andrew invited his brother, Peter, a boy with a lunch, and some Greeks, to Jesus. Then there are those who are always lending a helping, **servicing** hand. Sooner or later the other begins asking questions, and the stage is set for the winsome speech!

We are all different. The key essential is just do it. Jesus says I will be with you to the very end of the age! “We are Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf; Be reconciled to God” (II Corinthians 5:20) Wow! To think we are partners with Christ in the greatest mission this side of Heaven!!

John Zuck

*A FEW NOTES on the
GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE
ANNUAL MEETING:*

Theme: ALIVE, DYNAMIC, FRUITFUL CHURCHES



"...I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last." (Jesus...from John 15:16)

The 52nd GLC Regional Meeting was held on March 20 & 21, 2009, hosted by Pleasant Hill BIC Church, Pleasant Hill, Ohio and met at the Church of the Brethren.

Special **THANKS** to all of the **Pleasant Hill** people who prepared, planned for, and gave their time, energy, and talent to coordinate and host a tremendous 2009 Annual Meeting!

211 people from our five state region churches gathered to enjoy delicious desserts, great fellowship, and to celebrate planting and growing churches.

The Pleasant Hill worship team, interviews and vision encouragement rekindled our passion to bear fruit that will last for all eternity.

47 individuals and couples signed up for the **Prayer Team** to pray regularly for **alive, dynamic and fruitful churches** across our conference.

\$2000.00 was given for **hosting the GLC Annual Meeting**.

\$8037.33 was given and committed for planting a new church in the Great Lakes Conference.

\$4316.67 was given and committed to resourcing churches and coaching pastors.

\$9614.00 was given and **\$4740** was committed, yielding a total of **\$14,354.00 for 2009!**

The **Great Lakes Conference Lazy Susan** was auctioned for **\$2400** plus a sealed bid of **\$1150**, resulted in a total of **\$3550 for BECP training**.

- **Practical seminars** were presented on *"Transforming Conflicts in Your Congregation - Tools for Growth"* (Drew Strayer); *"Coaching for Success"* (Darin Simms); and *"Resourcing the Church on a Shoestring Budget"* (Jeremy Spear) involved over 100 enthusiastic participants.
- On Saturday, **126 meals** were served with **107 registered delegates**
- **Tanya Bundenthal** led the youth in a retreat (at Pleasant Hill Church and at The Barn) focusing on the **"Fruit of the Spirit"**, involving **26 youth and leaders**.
- **Keith Tyson** was elected Assistant Moderator for a two-year term.
- **Western Hills**, Cincinnati, Ohio was the fortunate congregation randomly selected to receive the Brother compact multi-function machine.

You will not want to miss the **2010 GLC Annual Meeting!** So mark your calendars for **March 19 & 20, 2010**. It will be hosted by our **NEW VISION, WISCONSIN** Congregation.

Thanks to each one of you for your prayers and continuing support of what God is doing across the Great Lakes Conference and beyond.

*Attention all pastors,
BOD Members and
Congregational
Leaders
2009 Willow Creek
Leadership Summit
August 6 & 7*

The Great Lakes Conference Board for Evangelism and Church Planting is charged with the dual responsibilities of planting new churches and promoting evangelistic outreach and discipleship in all of our churches. One of the ways your BECP is working to encourage leadership in evangelism is through enrichment opportunities for pastors.

In 2009 your BECP will fully cover the **super early bird registration fee** for all actively serving Great Lakes Conference pastors, Board of Directors members and 50% coverage for up to two Board or Leadership Team members from each congregation to attend a satellite location for the **Willow Creek Leadership Summit, August 6-7, 2009**.

While you may attend the satellite location of your choice in our five state area, you must register through the Great Lakes Conference Office on or before **May 11th** to qualify for this opportunity.

Note: The local church portion of payment for congregational leaders must be paid to the GLC office prior to the May 11th registration deadline. Full super early bird rate is \$145.00 per person through the GLC at the group rate.

Simply email, fax or mail your intention to register to us and indicate the satellite site of your choice.

grlkbic@bizwoh.rr.com, 937 698 1000, or PO Box 69, West Milton, OH 45383

Please see the Willow Creek website www.willowcreek.com for complete information and satellite locations in our five state area.

Thanks for your consideration!

September 18-20, 2009

GREAT LAKES

CONFERENCE

PASTORS &

SPOUSES ENRICHMENT RETREAT

Farmstead Inn, Shipshewana, Indiana

Pastors and Spouses be sure to mark your calendars now for our ANNUAL RETREAT

Time for relaxation, reconnecting, & rejuvenation.

2009 Autumn Retreat September 22-24, 2009

Camp Alexander Mack, Milford, Indiana

Theme: "Using Our Talents For God"

Retreat includes inspirational presentations, Bible study, hymn singing, informal indoor and outdoor activities, meeting old and new friends. Contact: Barb Stansfield at 419.289.0910 or bstansfield@juno.com

WMCC SPRING CLEAN UP

May 16 and 23

8:00—until?

Lunch will be provided. Come, enjoy the springtime and the fellowship of working together. Please bring paint brushes, scrapers, etc., and rakes. Leaf blowers always come in handy as well. **Thank you** for your participation in this ministry for the Great Lakes Conference

New Vision Core Course

June 22-25

Theology of the Church depicts the role of the people of God in the world, including the implications of brotherhood and peace. Taught by: Dr. Terry L. Brensinger and Dr. Eric Seibert

Location: New Vision BIC, Pewaukee, WI

Registration Deadline: June 8, 2009

CONGREGATIONS IN TRANSITION

WESTERN HILLS, OH: Please continue to pray for this inner city congregation, served by interim pulpit supply since July 2008, as they search for the pastor of God's choosing. Several interviews have been conducted and the search continues.

Highland, OH: Pray for outreach growth and development for this congregation as Bishop John concludes his service as Interim Pastor on June 28. Pray for Pastor Todd Hammond, serving as Associate Pastor since September 2008, as he assumes full responsibility. Pray for Andi, his wife, who was laid off from her employment of eight years in late February, that she will find suitable employment very soon with benefits.

CHURCH PLANT UPDATES

BEAVERCREEK COMMUNITY: This five-month-old congregation averages about 25 participating for Sunday worship. There is one small group meeting led by Michael Abell. Present outreach strategy focused on new residents mailings and Bring Friends Sunday, March 22. There is enthusiasm within the congregation and some are helping with coffee, newsletter, and take-down. One person is interested in baptism. Pray for Pastor Ken Abell as he leads this congregation in growth and development.

THE DIFFERENCE: This six-month church planting, which averages about 50 in attendance, is experiencing new guests nearly every Sunday since launch. A youth group has emerged, averaging about 10, led by Aaron Winn. Growth strategy focuses on relationship building, mailings, and special days. Pastor Cal Hamblin is receiving treatment for early stage prostate cancer. Please pray for the team as they lead this congregation in growth and development.

CHURCH NEWS

Fairview, Ohio: On February 22, an icy Sunday morning, the congregation and friends rallied together in full support of Pastor Mark Ballard's Ordination. Pastor Mark, Jenny and their children, Daniel and Allison, transitioned from the construction business in California to pastor this congregation in July 2004. Since then, the congregation has added 40 to their average Sunday participation, and has greatly increased their ministry to the community. On Sunday, February 1 it was announced that Mark and Jenny have accepted the invitation to serve the Fairview congregation and community for a further five year term. We celebrate with Fairview and the Ballards.

Union Grove: On Sunday, February 15th the congregation gathered to celebrate God's provision of a 27,000 square foot school for their new Worship Center. Many have invested hundreds of hours on renovating the facility and committed \$20.00 a week for two years above their regular giving to make this possible. The Dedication Service included this statement:

"Ecclesiastes 3: 3 states there is "...a time to tear down and a time to build". It has been tremendously exciting recently to keep in step with God's Spirit as He has led us to purchase a "new" facility and sell the old building that has served us for so many years. We have been tearing out, tearing down, rebuilding and remodeling a facility for worship, growth, building relationships and outreach into our surrounding communities. Today we celebrate God's blessing in providing this building which has emerged from the vision, prayer and giving of past years...The task is challenging, yet we are reminded that we are laborers together with God as He builds and grows His Church! Jesus said, "... I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:18), and it is a tremendous privilege to be involved in what God is doing!...We dedicate this place as a house of praise, prayer and worship to expand God's Kingdom for His honor and glory through Jesus Christ."

NOTE: "Sharing a Helping Hand Day" for outside and inside work at the new **Union Grove** facility location, 69954 CR 11, Nappanee, IN. Please contact Pastor Darin Simms for details. (740) 424-1286 or mssimms@yahoo.com

CAMP MEETING 2009: JULY 17TH - 24TH

Theme: "Do you not know? Have you not heard?"
(Isaiah 40:28-31)

Mike Holland and **Ron Howell** will be the evening speakers, **Luke Keefer** will be the Bible teacher for the week, and there will be workshops Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Wednesday is **Missions Day**, which is always inspiring and challenging. Friday afternoon will have a time slot for a **Vision Brainstorming Session** open to any and all. Plan to participate, because we seek all the ideas and input we can get, believing the body of Christ is enriched when our gifts, vision and suggestions are shared together in community. **Prayer Circles** and a small group prayer ministry will be developed under the direction of Keith Tyson.

Several **new items** have been added to this year's version of camp. First, Sunday morning will be a youth focused and directed service. **New Light** will lead worship, while the Youth Directors will plan and present the program. Adults will be welcome to attend, but if they choose not to, will be encouraged to visit one of the southern Ohio BIC Churches. There will be a special mini-concert Sunday evening beginning at 6:45. The

band will be developed under the leadership of a pair of professional musicians, **Donnie and Kelly Sorah**, who have worked with musicians and bands for several years. So, if you play and desire to join the concert band, please bring your instrument to camp and be available for practice from 3:30 to 6:00 Sunday afternoon. Also, there are plans in the works to recruit a Camp Choir, directed by Kara Kacmar.

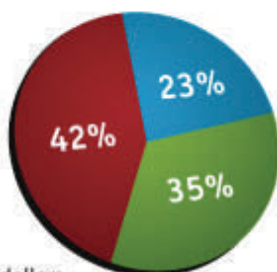
Another big change this year will be an effort to develop a ministry geared specifically for **twenty-somethings**. This will be led and organized by Jason Simpson, and a team that he will recruit. We are very appreciative of the plans he has put together, and look forward to working with him to help make this longstanding need a reality.

We are excited by the possibilities of what God will accomplish in our midst. **PLEASE pray, even now, for the ministry of Camp Meeting '09.** Pray for God to have His way in our lives, and for His mysterious and powerful work to be evident in the life of our conference. May God be honored and glorified by our humble efforts at MHC.

(Thank you, Pastor Ken Abell, for this 2009 Camp Meeting Focus.)

COOPERATIVE MINISTRIES-
THE EXCITEMENT OF BEING INVOLVED IN
WHAT GOD IS DOING!

- Encouraging leaders.** Your Cooperative Ministries dollars help support the identification, education, and nurture of pastors and other church leaders.
- Starting and supporting healthy congregations.** Your Cooperative Ministries dollars fund resources and services "seed" our church planting efforts and "feed" longstanding congregations.
- Going to all the world.** Your Cooperative Ministries dollars help underwrite half of the support for a new missionary with BICWM.



During 2008, 90% of our Great Lakes Conference congregations gave to Cooperative Ministries, with 55 %

giving 10% or more of their total 2008 budget to Encouraging Leaders, Starting and Supporting Healthy congregations and going into all the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ! Special thanks to all for your efforts to increase your giving during 2009 from 9 % across the GLC to 10%. That translates into a goal of about \$200,000.00 to Cooperative Ministries during this year.

Everyone is aware of the economic challenges of our times, yet giving toward expanding Christ's Kingdom is the best investment, yielding the greatest return for time and eternity! Thank you for your investment partnership across the Great Lakes Conference because we have "The Heart of the Good News for the Heart of America and Beyond!"

REPORT ON KENYA

By Paul Meduri, Pastor of King of Glory, Streetsboro, Ohio



Thanks so much for your prayer support that you gave me for this trip to Kenya. I could never do it without those who have made this commitment. It was a GREAT trip!

God moved tremendously, and the people were friendly and very hungry for the Word of God.

PJ and I each preached 22 times in the Pastor conferences, the church revivals and on Sunday morning. **We handed out 401 Bibles and Decisions for Jesus:** 35 people accepted Jesus for the first time during the revival services. 45 people made a recommitment during revival services. Two cab drivers accepted Jesus during rides to the airport. One pastor accepted the Lord for the first time.



The spring issue of **“In Part”** will be arriving soon. If you are not receiving this and would like to, please contact Kristine Frey, Editor at BIC General Church Communications, PO Box A, Grantham, PA 17027 or email your message to her at kfrey@bic-church.org

The spring 2009 issue of
IN PART
is
In Pursuit
OF THE BIBLE:



What’s Hermeneutics Got to do with It?—
The Bible: It’s God’s revelation to humankind and the believer’s touchstone for evaluating truth. But do we understand it?

Practically Speaking—
BIC church members discuss the role of Scripture in their everyday lives

The good (and bad) news about niche Bibles—
Are they a beautiful part of drawing new readers to the Bible or a thinly-veiled marketing ploy?

To the Point—
Has the sacredness of the Christian Scriptures been lost?

More on the Bible and what’s happening in the BIC Church at [INPART ONLINE \(BIC-CHURCH.ORG\)](http://INPARTONLINE(BIC-CHURCH.ORG))

World Hunger Funds in the United States and Canada are partnering together to support our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe. You do make a difference.



FAMILY to FAMILY **VILLAGE to VILLAGE**

we can make a
DIFFERENCE

Zimbabwe is a country in crisis. Inflation is out of control. Unemployment is at 90 percent. Drought and political turmoil have made farming almost impossible. Most Zimbabweans eat just one meager meal a day, and death from starvation is commonplace.

For just \$75 (USD or CAD), your family, small group, or Sunday school class can provide a Brethren in Christ family in Zimbabwe with **basic food and cooking supplies for a month.**

To find out how you can make a difference, go to BIC-CHURCH.ORG.



A number of the courses for on-line **Directed Study Program** are in high demand so please register early. Some of

the required courses are “Bible Survey”, “History of Christianity”, “Intentional Discipleship”, “Evangelism”, and “The World Christian Movement”.

Our **2009 Impact Seminar** deals with a very timely subject, “Surprised by Freedom: The Life You Always Wanted But Could Never Afford”. While designed to meet our Brethren in Christ lifelong learning expectation for pastors, it is also available for any interested persons.

The **Core Courses for 2009** will be held in six regional conferences. These on-site courses include “Leadership and Structure Within the Brethren in Christ Church”, “Theology of Salvation”, “Brethren in Christ History and Values”, and “Theology of the Church”. This year a special location for “Theology of the Church” will be our Navajo Mission. You can view catalog descriptions of the **Summer Term DSP** courses as well as the dates and locations for the Impact Seminars and Core Courses at www.bic-church.org/equipping. This is also the site to register for any of these offerings.

Contact: dsturr@bic-church.org or 717.697.2634

IMPACT SEMINAR

APRIL 18, 8:30-4:00 - PLEASANT HILL, OHIO

“SURPRISED BY FREEDOM: THE LIFE YOU ALWAYS WANTED, BUT COULD NEVER AFFORD”

In our North American culture, we hear messages that equate the “life we want” with material possessions always aspiring to a bigger house, a sleeker car, or even a surgically sculpted body. The world promises us freedom through financial conquest. But is that the way to true fulfillment, true freedom?



The 2009 Impact Seminar, *Surprised by Freedom: The Life You Always Wanted But Could Never Afford*, looks at the teachings of the Old Testament, Jesus, the early church, and our BIC core value Living Simply to counter the cultural and material pressures of our day. We will explore the freedom that lies not in material gain or status or power, but in the foundational teachings of Jesus to “seek first the kingdom of heaven.” Join us in exploring what the Bible teaches and how living simply can give us the freedom to afford the life we always wanted. Steve Lane, pastor of the Elizabethtown BIC Church and Lois Saylor, BIC Council for Women in Ministry and Leadership, are the resource people for this Impact Seminar. Details, schedule, and registration are available at www.bic-church.org/equipping/impact/impact_offerings.asp or you may call Donna Sturr at 717.697.2634, ext. 5435.

**DATES
TO
REVIEW:**



April 18:

IMPACT Seminar,
"Surprised by Freedom"
Pleasant Hill, Ohio

June 22-25

Core Course
"Theology of
the Church"
New Vision, Wisconsin

July 17-25

Camp Meeting
West Milton Christian
Center,
West Milton, Ohio

August 6 & 7

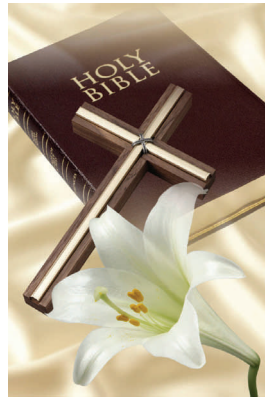
Willow Creek
Leadership Summit,
satellite locations

September 18-20

GLC Pastor / Spouse
Enrichment
Retreat

September 22-24

Autumn Retreat
"Using Our Talents
for God"
Camp Alexander Mack,
Indiana



April

- 2: Western Hills, Ohio, Pastoral Search Committee
- 5: Highland, Ohio, Palm Sunday
- 12: Highland, Ohio, Easter Sunday
- 18: Impact Seminar, Pleasant Hill, Ohio
- 19: Vacation
- 26: Vacation

May

- 3: Valley Chapel, Ohio
- 5-7: Leadership Council: Grantham, Pennsylvania
- 10: Highland, Ohio
- 16: Michiana Cluster Meeting: Nappanee, Indiana
- 17: Nappanee, Indiana
- 24: Vacation
- 31: Highland, Ohio

June:

- 6: Michigan Cluster Meeting: Mooretown, Michigan
- 7: Lakeview Community, Michigan

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!' In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade..." (1 Peter 1:3-4)



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: Items for our **June—July 2009** issue of *The Connection* should be in our office by **May 20, 2009**. **MAILING LIST:** If you do not wish to receive the Great Lakes Conference newsletter, please email our office or call us. If you prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletter, please let us know. We will honor your request. Please notify us if your email or mailing address has changed.

VISION STATEMENT

"Every person reaching people for Jesus Christ by developing a framework of community that encourages growing, discipling, and sending congregations."

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GREAT LAKES CONFERENCE PRAYER CALENDAR

“Every person reaching people for Jesus Christ by developing a framework of community that encourages growing, discipling, and sending congregations.”

1 Carland Zion, MI <i>Eric Stanton</i>	2 Dayton Mission, OH <i>John Pawelski</i>	3 Mooretown, MI <i>Paul Eberhard</i>	4 The Difference, OH <i>Calvin Hamblin</i>	5 Union Grove, IN <i>Darin Simms</i>	6 Leonard Community, MI <i>Steve Porter</i>	7 Amherst Community, OH <i>Les Bartley</i>	
8 Blessed Hope, WI <i>Randy Zimmerman</i>	9 Western Hills, OH <i>(in Transition)</i>	10 Iglesia El Buen Pastor, OH <i>David Espinosa</i>	11 Beavercreek Community, OH <i>Ken Abell Gary Warden</i>	12 Gethsemane Fellowship, OH <i>Dale McCabe</i>	13 Christ Chapel, OH <i>A.H. Barbee</i>	14 Mt. Zion, IN <i>George Elam</i>	
15 Valley Chapel, OH <i>Chuck Burkett</i>	16 Fairview, OH <i>Mark Ballard Dustin Sider</i>	17 New Vision, WI <i>John Fickett Neal Letteney Vicki Podjasek</i>	18 The Bridge @ Beans, IL <i>Rita Wolf Bruce Johnson</i>	19 Christian Union, IN <i>Joe Laher</i>	20 Morrison, IL <i>Dean Lambdin</i>	21 Impact Christian Fellowship, OH <i>Jeff Donihue</i>	
22 Nappanee, IN <i>Jeff Williams</i> Pleasant Hill, OH <i>John Weaver</i>	23 Westside Christian Community, OH <i>Costy Saba</i>	24 Bethel Merrill, MI <i>Mervin Potteiger</i>	25 King of Glory, OH <i>Paul Meduri</i>	26 Highland, OH <i>John Zuck Todd Hammond</i>	27 Ashland, OH <i>Keith Tyson</i>	28 Dayton, OH <i>Hank Chafin</i>	
29 Bethel Community, MI <i>Luke Wagoner</i>	30 Lakeview Community, MI <i>Jeremy Spear Mark De La Fuente</i>	31 Conference Leaders and Bishop John	<p style="color: #800080; font-weight: bold;">The day your church is prayed for, please pray for the bishop and conference leaders.</p>				

“THE HEART OF THE GOOD NEWS FOR THE HEART OF AMERICA AND BEYOND”