

Heartland Happenings

2019 HCN Annual Meeting- Emmaus Bible Church

Pastor Luke Gorsett and the staff at Emmaus Bible Church did a great job of hosting the Heartland Church Network's Sixty-first Annual Meeting. This year's theme was *Each One Branch One* as we focused on transferring a healthy God honoring DNA from generation to generation. It also continues a series of annual themes approved at our 2015 Annual Meeting: *Each One Reach One* with an emphasis on evangelism in 2016; *Each One Teach One* with an emphasis on discipleship in 2017; *Each One Start One* with an emphasis on multiplying small groups in 2018; and next year's theme will be *Each One Plant One* with an emphasis on church planting.



The 2019 meeting was opened in prayer by Pastor Luke Gorsett followed by a time of worship led by Emmaus' music leader Stephen Gates. The sixty-first session was called to order by Moderator Rev. Dr. Ralph Lassiter and included the approval of officers and work group members and the approval of the 2020 budget. Minutes and ministry reports were also approved as printed in the book of reports.

The theme interpretation was provided by Pastor Luke Gorsett who pointed us to the scriptural basis for the statement that "Christians are called upon to pass along a healthy, God-honoring and life transforming DNA to the next generation of believers." (Matthew 28:18-20, II Timothy 2:2, Titus 2:3-4, and Ephesians 6:4) He then challenged us in two key areas: 1) Clarity of Our Calling and 2) Faithfulness to Our Calling. On the first point he spoke of the priorities of Corporate Worship, Corporate Prayer, Leadership Development, Developing a Culture of Discipleship, and Training Parents. Pastor Gene Stockton of Heartland Community Baptist Church shared a testimony of how God is branching disciples in Sioux City. He told the story of the Quintanilla family that had come to Christ and is now involved in leadership at Heartland. It all started when the oldest daughter began to attend the church's Wednesday night children's ministry called Kids ROCK. She came as a result of the transportation ministry. Later, her younger brother and sister also began riding the bus and attending Kids ROCK. Over time, mom got curious and began to attend as well. Then dad got upset about them coming to church and forbid them to use a family vehicle to go to church. So, some ladies began to pick the mom up for worship on Sunday. Soon after, mom and two daughters and a son came to Christ and began to grow and change. Dad saw a difference and started coming to see what was causing the changes. He also came to Christ and over time God broke down the barriers between him and his brother. His brother saw such a change that he, his wife, and daughter also began coming. It wasn't long before they were saved and baptized. Also, during this time, the mom's brother moved back to the Sioux City area and got saved and baptized. Today both brothers are leading small groups and mom and dad are both involved in leadership roles at the church. In addition to all of that, recently, the brothers baptized their mother. *CONTINUED ON PAGE 5*



Calendar of Events

JANUARY

- 11 Christmas Fellowship
- 30 Lincoln Pastors' Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 6 Omaha Pastors' Meeting

MARCH

- 6-7 Man Up Conference (KNCSB)
- 12 Lincoln Pastors' Meeting
- 19 Omaha Pastors' Meeting
- 20-21 Disaster Relief Show & Shine

APRIL

- 17-18 Minister & Spouse Retreat
- 23 Lincoln Pastors' Meeting
- 30 Omaha Pastors' Meeting

The HCN Calendar can be found at the following link on the

HCN webpage:

<http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com/calendar.html>

"I know, Lord, that a man's way of life is not his own; no one who walks determines his own steps." –Jer. 10:23



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Mark Elliott, DoM

Haley Lester, Admin Assistant /Bookkeeper

Darrell Cumpton, Facilities Manager

Welcome Austin and Alicia Dovin to HCN

On October 13th, First Baptist Church of Bellevue called Austin Dovin to serve as the campus pastor at their Springfield site. Austin served as pastor of Elmer Baptist Church in Missouri before moving with his wife Alicia to Omaha earlier this year. They moved here for Alicia to attend Creighton as a student in the occupational therapy program.

Austin holds a Bachelor of Science in History from Truman State University in Kirksville, MO and is currently pursuing a Masters of Divinity from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City. He previously served as student pastor at First Baptist Church in Kirksville. Austin is working in the admissions office at UNO.

Pray for Austin and Alicia as they settle into life in Nebraska and lead First Baptist Springfield into the future.



February: Pastors' Wives Appreciation Month

You may have never heard of an appreciation month for pastors' wives. That's probably because it is something our Connect Work Group facilitated which Pastor Aaron Householder of Southview in Lincoln came up with. October has become well recognized as pastor appreciation month since its establishment in 1992. HCN's DoM Mark Elliott, who is in his twenty-seventh year of working closely with churches, would tell you that as challenging as pastoring is, being a pastor's wife is even more so.

This year, let me encourage you to do something special for the wife of your pastor, or the wives of your pastors if you are a multi-staff church. Last year, Harrison Street Baptist Church gave their pastor's wife a funny card signed by the congregation that included \$50 gas and \$50 Texas Roadhouse gift cards. The ladies of Southview Church hosted a tea for their pastor's wife and did a card shower.

A few years ago at a couple's retreat, we asked wives for some ideas of what a church member could do to show their appreciation. Here were some of their answers:

- Personal phone call to say "thanks"
- Spa/ pedicure/ manicure/ massage
- Weekend/ time away with hubby
- Gift Card
- Chocolate!
- Being a faithful church member
- Appreciation Card
- Offering to babysit



Remember, "the greatest of these is love" (I Cor 13:13)

HCN Leans into the Strength of the Baptist Association

Jesus said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). I believe He was referring to looking back with nostalgia for the "good old days." I would submit that looking back to learn the lessons of history so we don't repeat the mistakes of history is actually an imperative if we are to keep "the main thing the main thing." Over time, cultural and generational changes cause churches, associations, and other SBC entities to lose sight of the fundamental reason for their existence. Without an ongoing, impassioned, and clear statement of purpose, denominational life WILL devolve into maintenance mode. Tradition tends to lock us into a maintenance mindset, which has us constantly looking backward at the "good old days" rather than reminding us of why we came into existence in the first place.

The Baptist association was the first entity beyond the local church and it was organized by churches for mutual support, fellowship, and maintenance of doctrinal purity. Although associations, state conventions, and national SBC entities all exist today to support the work of the local church, each has its unique niche. The local association, in our case Heartland Church Network, has the ability to develop relationships with pastors and church leaders and discover the strengths and weaknesses not possible at the convention levels. As such, when HCN leans into its strength, we are identifying networking opportunities that will strengthen the local church.

One such example of the association leaning into its strength was a July 9th event HCN hosted for three churches all in a similar and somewhat unique stage of growth: healthy churches with a regional impact wondering what the next right step might be. Each church has uniquely gifted pastors and are in very different contexts: Matt Gilmore of Northern Heights in Norfolk, NE, Gene Stockton of Heartland Community Baptist Church in Sioux City, IA, and John Shields at Parkview Baptist in Lexington, NE. Three other pastors who have led churches through the joys and challenges of planting new churches or new campus locations were invited to share their insights. They were Charlie Robinson of NorthRidge Church that meets in four locations (two in Kansas and two in Nebraska); Steve Holdaway of LifeSpring Church in Bellevue that has done both planting and campus sites; and Ryan Johnston who is the new NAMB CPC in eastern Nebraska whose church in Ohio did multiple plants.

Mark Elliott, HCN's Director of Missions, facilitated the dialogue as each pastor who has led their church to multiply shared their story and answered a series of questions:

1. What did I do that, in my opinion, nobody else should ever do?
2. What did I do that, in my opinion, everyone should do to effectively navigate change?
3. What would be some key insights that only someone who has gone through transition and multiplication would know? In other words, what are some of the questions someone who hasn't been there, wouldn't know?
4. How and what did I have to change about myself to make the transition and multiplication possible?
5. What changes did my church have to experience to enable it to transition and multiply?
6. What's THE number one MOST important thing that I could tell you as you anticipate leading your church through transition and multiplication?



At the end of the day (9 a.m. to 3 p.m.) all the pastors who participated indicated that it had been a very valuable experience. The association leaned into its strength that day and connected churches for the purposes of fellowship and support.

HCN Disaster Relief Update

2019 was a particularly challenging year for HCN’s Disaster Relief as we responded to Nebraska’s historic flooding. 2020 will also be challenging as we experience a leadership transition. Darrell and Kathy Cumpton have purchased a home in southwest Missouri to be closer to family—especially grandchildren. We will still have them for a few months as they patiently migrate a lifetime’s accumulation of Darrell’s tools, equipment, and repair projects and a house full of their shared possessions. Easier to pack, but sometimes making it harder to move are the relationships created over a lifetime of ministering to others.

There are three dates that we want you to note as it relates to 2020 DR activities. The first is that we are promoting a love offering for Darrell and Kathy that will be presented to them at our January 11th annual Christmas Fellowship. The DR position has always been a volunteer role for HCN and we want to say THANK YOU to a couple who have given compassionately above and beyond all that you could think or imagine. As DoM Mark Elliott recognized the Cumpions at the annual meeting, as he pointed out that a mechanic’s own cars are usually in need of repair because he’s too busy working on other people’s vehicles to work on his own—plus he doesn’t get paid for working on his own. God gifted Darrell with skills to repair or fabricate almost anything. When you add that to a heart to serve others, it created a lifetime accumulation of projects at his house that will take months for them to move to Missouri. We did say a small thank you at HCN’s Annual meeting as we presented Kathy with a set of Pioneer Woman dishes for her new kitchen and dining room, but we would like to say THANK YOU in a big way. So, pray about what your church should do and then send love offerings as directed by God to HCN with a note stating Cumpton Love Offering.

A second date for you to remember will be Saturday January 25th. HCN will host a Disaster Relief Future Directions Strategy meeting at the HCN office starting at 10 a.m. and concluding with lunch. HCN DR has the largest fleet of disaster relief equipment in the region and we need to prayerfully consider how God would have us steward these resources into the future. In case of winter weather issues a backup date will be February 1.

The third date to note will be the 2020 Show and Shine that will be hosted by Southview Church in Lincoln—they were scheduled to host last year, but our floods literally washed out the event. The hands on training will be March 20-21 where participants can receive formal SBC classroom and unit training.

Pray that God will direct us as we look to strengthen HCN’s Disaster Relief ministry in the future.



Northern Heights Establishes Colegio Bautista Latinoamericano

Spearheaded by Northern Heights Baptist Church’s Associate Pastor for Hispanic Ministries David Martinez, the church began offering Spanish language classes in February 2019. The idea has been part of Pastor David’s vision for some time, and it was launched with great success. Fifteen students enrolled in the weekly classes that meet at the church under the umbrella of Colegio Bautista Latinoamericano (CBL or in English Latin American Baptist College). It is an exciting group that includes students of all ages! Some desire to serve as a pastor, all are actively involved in church life, and one student is a member of a sister church in Columbus.

The stated mission of CBL is to provide academic training to Christians who have the desire in their hearts to serve and to be trained in the doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is designed to equip those who desire to be obedient to God’s call as pastors or to enhance the effectiveness of those serving as leaders in a local Baptist Church.

Classes are held on Monday night from 6-8 p.m. The curriculum is designed and taught so that it can be completed in two years with a “Certificate in Christian Theology and Education” being awarded to each student who completes the course with a passing grade. Topics covered in the first few months have included the Doctrine of God, Inductive Method of Bible Study, Small Groups, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Christian Discipleship, Doctrine of the Bible, How to Study the Bible, Homiletics, Evangelism, Church Planting, Anchors of the Faith, Path of Christian Maturity, Doctrine of the Church. Pastor David is the primary instructor but he has invited guest teachers to come in at least once a month. Those teachers have included: Steve Reed, who has led multiple mission teams to Guatemala; Jesus Leal, who is pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista in South Sioux City; Dallas Powell, who serves as a NAMB Church Planting Catalyst; and Mark Elliott, who is HCN’s Director of Missions.

Pray for Northern Heights, Pastor David Martinez, and the students.



Sabbatical

The principle of rest was established in the creation process itself: “Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (Genesis 2:1-3). It was deeply ingrained in Jewish culture during the exodus as God provided quail and manna on six days and they used the leftovers on the Sabbath. Then it was codified in the Ten Commandments where God said, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8-11). We have significant biblical and historical evidence that the Jews kept the command for a weekly Sabbath.

However, scripture expanded the concept of rest when God commanded them to observe a Sabbath Year every seven years and the Year of Jubilee every fifty years (Leviticus 25). These were designed to be a time of rest for the land and a time of restoration for the culture. In the Year of Jubilee the land would lay fallow for two consecutive years, Jewish slaves would be set free, and the land outside the cities would be restored to its ancestral ownership. This was to acknowledge God's ownership of the land (Lev. 25:23) and His undisputed possession of all Israelites as His servants (Lev 25:55).

Seven years ago the association permitted me to slip away for a three-week extended vacation/sabbatical. Since I am not getting any younger, and the workload is not getting any lighter (particularly when you factor in this year's disaster relief efforts), the topic of taking a brief sabbatical surfaced during my annual review. We discussed the need for me to step away and get some rest and reflection time. And our Administrative Work Group has approved November 19-January 3 as a vacation/sabbatical time.

I write this article for two reasons: first, to inform you of my schedule and what I will be doing during that time, and second, to encourage you to prayerfully consider doing a sabbatical yourself. Ministry is hard—most of you have heard me quote Proverbs 14:4 and include my paraphrase, “ministry would be a lot easier if I didn't have to deal with people; however, people are my ministry.” All pastors need to step back from time-to-time. As I heard it said once, “If we don't come apart from among them, we WILL come apart at the seams.”

I can hear you saying, “But my church can't afford to give me a sabbatical!” To which I will reply with one question and two offers. Question: “Have you ever asked your church for a sabbatical?” Maybe you have not because you ask not. My offer is two fold. First, if you are uncomfortable asking, invite me to your next personnel meeting, and I will ask on your behalf. My second offer is that HCN will coordinate pulpit supply or assist with covering ministry needs while you are gone, as requested and/or as needed.

Now back to getting you up to speed on what I will be doing on my vacation/sabbatical. First priority is getting some long overdo “honey do's” taken care of at the house. Then a little family time Thanksgiving week in Oklahoma and officiating the wedding of Phyllis' daughter Kristi in Illinois. Back home for a few days and then a week in Branson.

Specific work projects I will be working on during my sabbatical include:

- Doing discussion summaries on two books: *The Leadership Pipeline* by Charan, Drotter, and Noel and *Restoring the Fallen* by Wilson, Friesen, and Paulson.

Sabbatical CONTINUED

- Reading and researching ministry leadership transitions and developing suggestions on leadership transitions for churches and ministry organizations.
- Doing further research on biblical approaches to ministry restoration and doing a summary report for a currently active accountability team.
- Doing additional research on the topics in the book “Leadership Pipeline,” review NAMBs Leadership Pipeline material, and identify strategic skills, time applications, and work values as it relates to leadership roles in a typical church.
- Praying through what the right strategy planning process should look like for HCN, as we will wrap up our five-year strategic plan steps at our 2020 Annual Meeting.
- Working with Phyllis on the book we promised to write together about navigating the troubled waters of losing a spouse, and finding God's match for the final leg of what has now become a relay rather than a marathon race through life.

Thank you for your graciousness and patience in permitting me this time away. I covet your prayers as I seek to step back into the day-to-day working of HCN revived, energized, and focused on what God has in store for us in 2020 and beyond.

2019 Annual Meeting- Emmaus Bible Church CONTINUED

On the cover of the 2010 Book of Reports was a picture of an aspen grove as a symbol of the theme *Each One Branch One*. Mark Elliott, HCN's Associational Missions Strategist, pointed out that an aspen grove provides a unique illustration for the theme. As parents we are called upon by God to pass along a Godly Christ-honoring heritage to our children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). And as the church we are called on to make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20 and II Timothy 2:2).

Aspens are unique in that they reproduce both by seeds and by root sprouts, and sprouting is the most common and successful form of reproduction. Root sprouting results in many genetically identical trees, in aggregate called a “clone”. All the trees in a clone have identical DNA, characteristics, and share a common root structure. Just like parents and churches are called to pass along Christ-like DNA and characteristics to the next generation.

The largest and oldest known aspen grove is the “Pando” clone on the Fishlake National Forest in southern Utah. Also known as the “Trembling Giant.” It is a grove of individual male quaking aspen, and it has been determined to be a single living organism by having identical genetic markers. It is also believed to have one massive underground root system. It is over 100 acres in size and weighs more than 14 million pounds. That is more than 40 times the weight of the largest animal, a blue whale. It is estimated that 5-10,000 year-old clones are common in the grove.

If God can create one tree that can reproduce itself and sustain its DNA for 5-10,000 years, shouldn't we, who are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) and who are called to be a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), be able to do the same thing after only 2,000 years? The challenge for believers and churches is to differentiate between our cultural DNA and our Biblical DNA and to faithfully pass along the latter.

Before Pastor Aaron Householder closed the 2019 session in prayer there was a special recognition time for HCN's Disaster Relief Coordinators Darrell and Kathy Cumpton. A separate article will speak to that issue.