

E.C. Leader

Futures Initiative—Part 2

Last month shared a brief overview of two of the six Futures Initiative Work Groups to help you understand the kinds of issues they're wrestling with and to help you pray more specifically. The Futures Initiative strategic planning work began with the launch meeting on August 18. I am please to report that the six Work Groups have begun their individual studies of the past, present, and future of the Evangelical Congregational Church. The six Work Groups are: Affiliates, Congregation-Denomination Relations, Denominational Structure, Ecclesiology, Finance, and Global Ministries. These groups will be studying their area of focus and presenting a written report with specific recommendations to the Futures Initiative Core Group which will then present a final report to the National Ministry Team and ultimately the National Conference of our denomination.

In the September issue of the EC LEADER we highlighted the Affiliates and Congregation-Denomination Relations work groups. This month it's the Denominational Structure and Ecclesiology work groups. In November we'll wrap it up with an overview of the issues being faced by the Finance and Global Ministries work groups.

Please remember that the successful work of the Futures Initiative Team is dependent on the presence and leading of God's Holy Spirit. Join me in prayer for the Lord's clear leading of this vital work.

In Christ's service,



Rev. Bruce D. Hill
Bishop



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Denominational Structure



To evaluate our current denominational and church structure recognizing our unique presbyterian and congregational hybrid structure. This should be done with the magnifying glass strained on our existing structure—including what we say we do and what we actually do. Further, we should measure our findings in light of the ideals of Scripture and propose modifications or changes to our EC structure in order that we be (or become) the biblical Church or biblical expression of the Church.

Ecclesiology



To biblically and practically define church (that would be Church, as well as church), church on a mission, and church in the world. Jesus had something very specific in mind when he breathed life into the Church, His living Body. It is this “something very specific” that we need to understand and embrace as the people of the Church. As much as possible, this work should be done from the Bible out, rather than looking for biblical support for what we already are or do.

If you’ve been paying attention to the developments in current thought when it comes to the church and culture you’ve no doubt noticed three words that come up over and over again: **DISCIPLESHIP, MISSIONAL, and MOVEMENT.**

Rev. Al Giles (St. Matthew’s EC Church, Emmaus, PA) who has personally been involved in a 3DM Learning Community for a year says, “If I could put in one word the concepts and lifestyle involved in these three hot-button words, it would be **3DM!**”

3DM is bringing a “Discipleship & Mission Workshop” to the mid-Atlantic region on **November 27-29** in **Alexandria, VA.** For details and to register see www.weare3dm.com/events.

During the past year, Pastor Al has discovered the genius of 3DM is that they use the very vehicles that will carry the movement in your local setting, in their “workshops”. There is no wasted effort or time. You will learn about discipleship huddles in a huddle. You will receive input, begin to imitate and then be encouraged to inno-

vate while you are there. If you want to know what “you’ll get out of the experience” - here’s the take home:

- 1) Exposure to the vehicles of huddles and Missional communities, which are vehicles many have heard of but want to see more closely as they evaluate how to best move forward with mission and discipleship.**
- 2) Some basic items in a folder and a small workbook.**
- 3) The main thing you will receive is time in the worship itself, including dinners with the team as they model what Missional communities are like.**

If you are not familiar with Mike Breen and his 3DM team, you might also check out their insightful blog: <http://weare3dm.com/blogs/>.



The Bishop's TOP TEN Prayer & Praise Items

1. Continue to pray for the Futures Initiative Team as the various work groups research, study, and hear God's voice for the future of our denomination.
2. Pray for our nation as we move closer and closer to a very contentious presidential election.
3. Remember all those who are settling in to a new year of school: from elementary schools all the way through to graduate schools. Pray for the Lord's leading of the students, the teachers, and the administrators.
4. Ask the Lord to protect the missionaries serving Him in foreign countries at a time when there is growing hostility against Americans.
5. Pray for our denomination's institutions: Evangelical Seminary—the opening of the Harrisburg Campus; StoneRidge Retirement Living—a large building project; our camps as they enter the retreat season.
6. Praise the Lord for the individuals who have willingly taken on the task of being a part of the Futures Initiative Team. Praise Him, too, for churches who are allowing their pastors the extra time to be involved in this important work.
7. Thank God for the good reports I'm receiving from congregations as they restart their fall ministries and events.
8. Praise God for his continued protection of Gloria and I as we spend lots of time on the road as I preach in our churches.
9. Praise the Lord for the changing seasons. Even if you enjoy the summer heat like Gloria does; the coming of fall reminds us of God's faithfulness season after season, year after year.
10. I praise God for the many people who remind me that they are praying for me as their Bishop. Prayer does make a difference!



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Conference
Journals
Are
Ready!**

**Churches
should have re-
ceived their
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CD.**

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CD's can be ordered
by contacting the
Church Center Office
blong@eccenter.com
or 717-866-7581.





News from Global Ministries

UPDATE ON LALROSIEM SONGATE'S USA EDUCATION

Rev. Lalrosiem Songate, Principal-elect of Evangelical Theological College in North East India is now enrolled at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Yes, it is a Lutheran Seminary but Lalrosiem is in a missions Ph.D. program with other international leaders and not taking Lutheran studies. He would appreciate emails, and old fashioned mail. If you would like to help with his educational costs please send contributions to GMC and mark them "Songate education."

Address:

Lalrosiem Songate
Box 265
Concordia Theological Seminary
660 North Clinton Street
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
Email: lalrosiem.songate@ctsfw.edu
Cell: 717-507-8933



GMC FALL FAMILY MISSION RALLY: October 12-13, 2012

The Fall Rally will be held at the Boyertown Trinity EC Church and will begin on Friday with a luncheon for pastors and mission leaders. Saturday's Rally will include programs for adults, youth and children that will run concurrently. We have a great group of missionaries on home assignment this year who will be sharing their ministries with us including:

- Nick & Lisa Lakatos
- Dan Dixon
- Lamar & Janice Stoltzfus
- Gloria Smethers
- Rev. Elias Martinez, the Director of the EC Church of Mexico



*ATTENTION YOUTH PASTORS & LEADERS:

We are super excited to announce that Tim King, Director of the evangelism ministry DRAMA will be leading the youth track. Check out this ministry at www.dramateam.org.

You have received bulletin inserts and invitation letters to use in your congregation soon! In the meantime you can RSVP to the GMC office by October 1, 2012.

SUSQUEHANNA MISSION LEADERS' BRUNCH: NOVEMBER 13, 2012

Susquehanna Region mission-minded leaders, mark your calendar for the second annual Mission Leaders' Brunch for November 13, 2012 from 10:00-12:00. The location is still being confirmed but watch for an invitation letter and more information within the coming weeks!

GMC OFFICE ASSISTANT POSITION ENDS DECEMBER 31, 2012



In order to reduce the operating costs of the GMC office, the part time GMC Office Assistant position currently held by Carla Sizemore will be eliminated at the end of the year. Deputy Director Pat Strain will assume the majority of the Office Assistant's duties, including the scheduling of missionaries for our local churches. Carla will continue to coordinate the Missionary Prayer Partner program and help in other areas in a volunteer capacity. We thank Carla for her years of service as the GMC Office Assistant and for her willingness to continue to serve the GMC as a volunteer!

VBS PROJECT EXCEEDS GOAL!!

The VBS project for this year—funds to build a security fence around the women's dormitory at Evangelical College of Theology in Churachandpur, Northeast India was a great success thanks to all who participated. So far we have exceeded our goal of \$10,000 and have collected \$14,968!! If you haven't sent in your VBS offerings, please send it as soon as possible so we can get a final total and send the funds in October.



It seems like just about every political commentator is saying that the November 6 Presidential Election will be a critical moment in the history of the United States. The *EC Discipline* states: "The proper social involvement of Christians must be considered carefully. ...We must not be deterred from such efforts by those who accuse Christians of imposing their own moral standards upon other people. It must be remembered that all who seek to establish social codes of behavior, of necessity, do the

same thing, since all laws reflect the ethical position of the person(s) seeking to enact or maintain them. In a free society, especially, Christians have the right as well as the obligation to influence the moral level of society. ...As a creation of God, however, the state's power is never absolute. It must not appropriate to itself those privileges and duties that belong to the individual, the family, or the church. When government neglects or abuses its divinely appointed responsibilities, the Christian, as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:12), must speak out against or, if necessary, refuse to follow public policies that directly threaten the people of God, the family, or the basic rights of persons (Exodus 1:17; Acts 5:29) and be willing to suffer the legal consequences thereof." (excerpted from *The Discipline of the EC Church* Sections 144.1 & 144.2)

Many church leaders are wondering just what they can and cannot do. iVoteValues.org presents a comprehensive campaign you may want to consider. The website features all kinds of information and tools:

- Voter impact Kits—multimedia materials, posters and resource guide
- Citizenship Sunday Resources—how-to guide, message notes, voter registration guides
- Values Campaign Tool Kit—for those wanting to engage in voter registration
- iVoteValues Video—encouraging values-based voting
- Legal Do's and Don'ts—for pastors and churches



Practical Help for Tough Times! The Center for Lifelong Learning, in cooperation with Good Samaritan Health System, Lebanon, PA, presents a seminar for pastors, health care workers, and anyone else who journeys with those walking through the valley of death and grief, on Monday, October 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. “Dying is inevitable...preparing is optional,” so a doctor, funeral director, and pastor will present their respective insights and advice for caregivers and those facing end of life issues.

The \$45 fee includes three sessions, Q&A, and lunch; CEUs are also available. For complete details and online registration, check out the GSH seminar at www.evangelical.edu/lifelonglearning.

September 27 Faith in the Marketplace Breakfast features Christian Leinbach, Chairman of the Berks County (PA) Commissioners. The quarterly event in Zinn Commons runs from 7:00-8:30 a.m. and encourages participants to “connect Sunday with Monday.” Call Marsha Conley at 717-866-5775 or register online at the seminary website (www.evangelical.edu) by September 20.

Friends of Evangelical Banquet is almost here! Join the Evangelical family and friends for a delicious meal and inspiring program on Friday, October 19, at 6:30 p.m. (reception at 5:45) at Lancaster’s Calvary Church. Our special guest is singer and songwriter Steve Green, who will minister in word and song. Reserve your place now by contacting Marsha Conley or using the convenient online registration (www.evangelical.edu).



“Conversations that Matter” is a new monthly opportunity for dialogue with knowledgeable leaders about important topics. On Thursday, October 11, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Kristin Komarnicki will address human trafficking. The free, informal event takes place in Zinn Commons. Everyone is welcome...bring a brown bag lunch if you’d like, and benefit from the discussion.



Make a special note: The Annual Retiree Recognition Day will be held on Wednesday, October 10th at 12:00 noon at the StoneRidge Campus, Myerstown.

News from Benefits & Compensation

On Wednesday, September 12, the EC Benefits Corporation Board of Trustees approved a change of insurance carriers from Capital Blue Cross to Highmark Blue Shield (Highmark) effective October 1, 2012. Health insurance rates will remain constant, no increase.

A brief summary of the plan changes: no limit on the number of physician office visits, primary care physician co-pays will increase by \$10 to \$30, minor changes to prescription co-pays and a decrease in the emergency room co-pay. The drug formularies between the plans are very similar. The central Pennsylvania Highmark provider network is comparable to the Capital Blue Cross network. Outside of central Pennsylvania the provider networks are identical. A benefit summary of the Highmark plan is available on the website, www.eccenter.com.

The Highmark plan will still utilize an HRA to fund the deductible and co-insurance costs not the responsibility of the pastor. While the rates are remaining constant the possibility of increasing rates to the churches during the year remains open if we experience a high cost claims year. The 2011-2012 plan year, has been a low cost claims year and we should end the year with a moderate surplus in HRA funding. The new Highmark plan has a lower total out of pocket maximum and coupled with the HRA surplus will limit the likelihood of a mid-year rate increase. An employer funded HRA is risky, but we have a much smaller risk going into the new plan year.

PrimePay will continue to administer the HRA and the pastor will be responsible for the first \$500 of covered healthcare expenses. Power Kunkle remains our insurance broker and is a preferred broker for Capital Blue Cross and Highmark Blue Shield. Questions for either plan may be directed

to Nikki Mengel at Power Kunkle at (610)685-1790 or nmengel@pkbenefits.com.

Unfortunately, the dental plan will be discontinued on September 30, 2012. The cost for a comparable dental plan with Highmark was prohibitive.

The Highmark enrollment process has already begun. If you have made any changes to your plan (add or remove family members) during September review your Highmark enrollment when received and notify Dave King or myself with any changes. Highmark Blue Shield ID cards should be received by members by October 1.

HRA reimbursements are due to PrimePay by December 29, 2012 for covered healthcare expenses incurred by September 30, 2012. This is an HRA rule regardless of the insurance carrier. Reimbursements not received by December 29 will not be paid. No exceptions.

The proposed Highmark Senior Blue Plan will have a very small increase in the monthly premium with some minor additional costs, office visit and prescription co-pays will have a slight increase. The proposed plan will be discussed and voted on for approval at the September 25 meeting of the EC Benefits Board of Trustees and the details of the new plan released shortly after.

Thank you for your prayers, patience, and understanding through this process. If there are any questions or problems please contact Dave King, dking@eccenter.com or Kevin Henry, khenry@eccenter.com at the EC Church Center, 1-800-866-7581.

Kevin Henry
Controller

David King
Benefits Administrator

A CATALYST One Day event will be held at LCBC Manheim Campus (2392 Mount Joy Road, Manheim, PA 17545) on November 15, 2012 from 8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. This is a One Day leadership experience packed with insight from two well known leadership voices in the church today. During this One Day Craig Groeschel and Andy Stanley will uncover secrets to creating a healthy organizational culture. Learn how to create environments where we...

- **LIVE OUR VALUES**—Don't just claim core values but live them out.
- **EMBRACE CHANGE**—Face transitions with optimism and courage.
- **NURTURES AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIP**—Create an environment of relational safety and respect.
- **FUEL SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**—Candidly share a journey of spiritual formation and spur others toward authentic transformation.
- **FOSTER CONTINUAL PROGRESS**—Don't just become better—become better at what matters.

Find more information and register at http://www.catalystoneday.com/event/event_lancaster_pa/

If you link to Catalyst from HOPE International (<http://www.facebook.com/hopeintl>), they have a special price.

BIBLICAL PREACHING SEMINAR

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

1:00 p.m.—4:30 p.m.

Grace Community E.C. Church, 212 Peach Bottom Road, Willow Street, PA 17584

Speaker: Rev. Dr. Randal Pelton

Cost: \$15 advanced; \$20 after October 20th

Make checks payable to: "E.C. Church"

Send registration & payment to: Rev. Dr. Gordon Lewis, 100 W. Park Ave., Myerstown, PA 17067

Have you considered the **Two Day Basic Coach Training Event on November 7 and 8**. The event will be held at the **Church Center in Myerstown**. This training event is presented in cooperation with Coaching 4 Clergy and is designed to furnish leaders in ministry with basic coaching skills that will augment their natural skill sets and provide them with additional tools for leadership success.

The cost for the two day event is \$200.00 and includes the training, C4C resource materials, continental breakfasts, noon meals, break snacks and CEU credits. This event can handle a maximum of 15 participants, but a minimum of 6 are needed to conduct the event, so if you are interested, please register by September 20. The trainer will be Fred Moury, who is listed in the "Find a Coach" section of the Coaching 4 Clergy website. For additional information or to register, e-mail Fred Moury at pastorfred71@windstream.net or call him at 717-201-8684.