

Illinois District Council of the Assemblies of God



DOING LIFE TOGETHER

2008-2009 ANNUAL REPORT

2009 ILLINOIS PRESBYTERY



Row 1, left to right: V. Lee Amsler, Phillip B. Schneider, Gary J. Blanchard, Larry H. Griswold, W. Michael Massey, Richard L. Stratton;

Row 2, left to right: Rick L. McGough, Ronald W. Heitman, Joel E. Labertew, B. G. Nevitt, Frederick A. Doughty;

Row 3, left to right: Jeffrey L. Gowen, Gary W. Grogan, Douglas R. Banks.



LARRY H. GRISWOLD

FOCUS

Philippians 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

4 Focus Points

GENERATION NEXT

- Identify and encourage emerging leaders in our Fellowship.
- Make cross-generational friendships and mentoring relationships commonplace in District life.
- Listen to emerging leaders as plans for future District ministries are made.

CHURCH PLANTING

- Identify strategic target cities for church planting efforts.
- Embed “church planting into the DNA of each church.
- Remove the “fear factor” from the church planting process.
- Add valuable proven resources to church planting teams.
- Commit to the long haul of successful church planting.

CHURCH REVITALIZATION

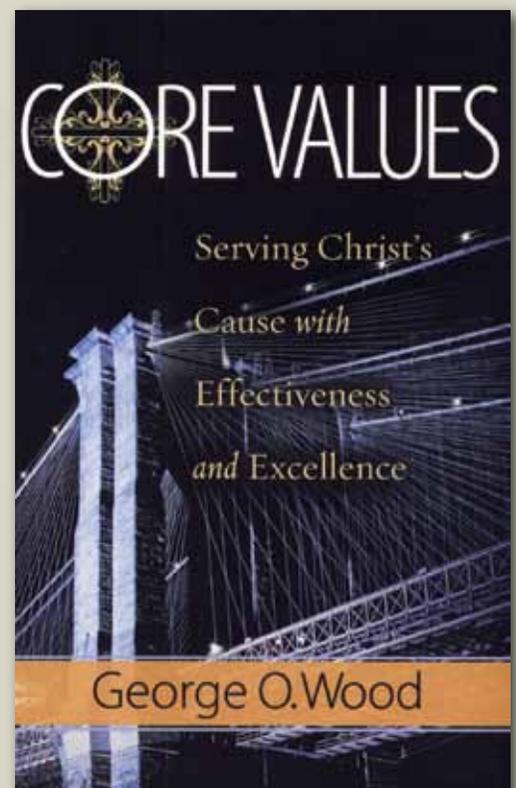
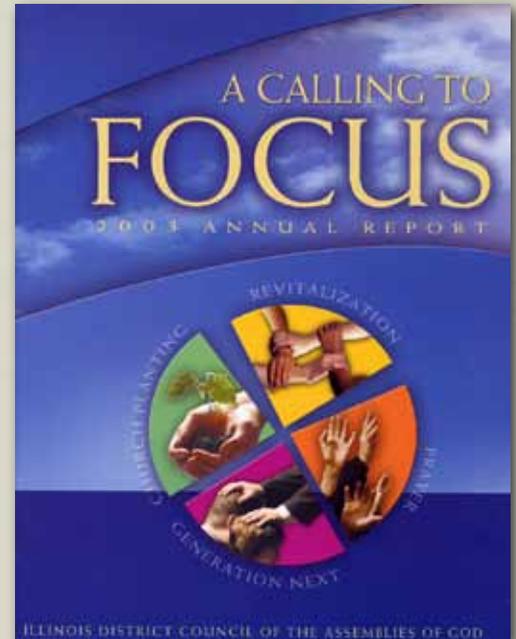
- Remove the “fear factor” and the “pride factor” from our ability to identify needed revitalization targets.
- Apply proven principles and practical resources to the church revitalization efforts.
- Build TEAMS of church revitalization helpers.
- Ensure that neighboring pastors become teammates in the church revitalization process.

PRAYER

- Provide models and encouragement for the discipline of personal prayer.
- Provide workable resources for churches to institute and sustain effective prayer ministries.
- Return “prayer” to the daily conversation of ministry life.

5 Core Values

1. Passionately proclaim, at home and abroad, by word and deed Jesus as Savior, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer, and Soon Coming King.
2. Strategically invest in the next generation.
3. Vigorously plant new churches.
4. Skillfully resource our constituency.
5. Fervently pray for God’s favor and help as we serve Him with pure hearts and noble purpose.



Paul understood focus, self-evaluation, and energy for the unfinished task. It was true for him in the “ultimate prize” (expressed in the Philippiian passage) and in the daily task of fulfilling each part of the journey.

I am persuaded that this Word is applicable to my life and assignment at this time, and perhaps is an accurate Word for our District family this year.

In short, we have the goal in view, we are not satisfied with the accomplishment, and we will give all energy toward achieving those clear goals.

Our church is being served well by our new Executive Leadership. Dr. George O. Wood and the Executive Leadership Team are providing excellent service to this Fellowship – conserving the strength of our history, while crafting new and creative approaches to today’s needs. Our assignment is perhaps no more clearly defined than in a reading of the “5 Core Values” that God has placed on the heart of our leader.

These values should be more than a nice book to distribute, or a guide for “those who serve in Springfield;” rather, these values should be used to assess and guide every level of our church – both District and local church levels. One can easily see that these 5 Core Values are an effective re-statement of the 4 Focus Points that were pressed upon my heart in the early days of my assignment as Superintendent.

If we are to ask the question, “How are we doing?”, these core values should be a benchmark of measurement for our progress. Time and space will not permit a complete analysis of our journey. The temptation, always, is to write a favorable report. The need is to hear an honest, Spirit-directed evaluation of our progress. Let’s take a quick tour.

PRAYER

Our District family has responded well to called prayer gatherings. Every pastoral transition or church revitalization meeting is bathed in prayer, and in a calling of that local church to focused prayer. Across this state, significant testimonials exist where pastors have led seasons of intense prayer which have become the soil where growth, improvement, or significant steps forward have occurred. I commend every effort.

I wonder...I wonder...how many times have we failed or experienced frustration in the ministry journey because of the LACK of prayer? (“...All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer...”).

GENERATION NEXT

The “Called Camp” is an intentional follow-through to those special moments of altar response at key events of Student Ministries, and gives hands-on connection to the question of, “What will this call look like?” and “How do I begin to pursue His Will?” Illinois School of Ministry (ISOM) will be detailed more in Gary Blanchard’s report, but is a visible expression of a highly successful effort to pave-the-path from Call to Credential. Our enrollment and results have exceeded all initial goals.

Connection with the Superintendent’s Advisory Council has created positive input to our District gatherings and has shaped our efforts. The journey of opening the door wide and listening well to the next generation is never-ending, and must continually be improved upon.

CHURCH HELP

Several key tools have been utilized through our District journey. One hundred sixty-four pastors and lay leaders have journeyed through the pastor and leadership team Catalytic Church program, led by Dan Ball. Julie Markese continues to work one-on-one with Natural Church Development (NCD) assessment and locally-chosen Church Health Teams, In turn, these church leaders are asked to help multiply the effort through adopting another church for the same journey. Positive results from that multiplication process are already being experienced.

We have heard of wonderful experiences with healthy churches “adopting” nearby churches to advance the work of God in that community. This takes all shapes and forms –but begins with willing spirit, shared resources, and day-by-day encouragement.

No single tool works effortlessly or automatically in the goal to regain church health. Often, identifying the key elements is only the first step in the disciplined, God-led journey of strengthening the Lord’s Church. The willingness to help one another, the courage to self-assess, and the prayerful journey of laying aside pride and personal agenda are never-ending tasks that MUST be accomplished.

I am thrilled at the strong effort that is beginning to surface in our Region Teams for the assignment of “District Supervision.” These caring, come-alongside, coaching, encouraging, and growing efforts are signs of the very target that was in view in the proposal, adoption, and now beginning implementation of our restructuring based on recommendations of the Strategic Task Force. This journey must and will continue!

CHURCH PLANTING

Perhaps no single aspect of the vision for the Assemblies of God is front-page like the efforts of becoming a Fellowship known for “church planters.” The Church Multiplication Network (CMN) and AG Trust are partnering to identify, empower, and add resources to the great need of church planting throughout our Fellowship. Some of our church plants have already qualified for the AG Trust church planting funds.

Yet, perhaps no single aspect of this vision is “found wanting” than in the assessing of “How have we done?” in church planting.

The Illinois District has partnered with the “Church Planters’ Boot Camp” to provide training and idea-sharing for each church plant. We have witnessed notable success when church-planting-teams have worked together. We have identified “ready communities” across the entire spectrum of our state that are considered targets for church plants.

All of this is good...but not good enough!

We must move from the idea of “some will plant” to “all will partner.”

We must move from the church planting being the “exception,” to becoming the “norm.”

At this Council, I will share a District-wide, every-church participation challenge in the goal to populate the state of Illinois with thriving church plants!

THANKS

It is an honor and privilege to address this Council for the 6th time as Superintendent.

Often, Coleen and I join the celebration of local churches for anniversaries and building dedications. At those moments, the history of that particular church is viewed through the lens of pastoral tenure – what pastor was here at what particular time. That perspective indicates the influence and vision that a leader brings. Through the years, we have been served well by faithful, godly pastoral leaders.

This church Fellowship is also rich when one measures the congregation in terms of its people. In the opportunities of local church ministry, in-house training sessions, pastoral-transition teams, and a host of other contacts, I have discovered the Illinois Assemblies of God to be served effectively by a host of God-gifts. We salute them all – deacons, elders, teacher, ushers, greeters, worship teams, technical personnel, custodians, care-givers, nursery workers, evangelism teams, and more – they are truly people of God!

It is an honor to serve this Fellowship.

I salute the credential family of IDC.

I thank God for the Presbytery who serve this Fellowship well – and who are friends, as well as co-laborers.

I am blessed by the Executive Presbytery – who give willingly of time and counsel. They are truly leaders among leaders.

We have a wonderful team of servants who as Department Directors daily give themselves on your behalf.

Gary and Anne Blanchard are trusted partners, dear friends, and anointed servants.

Coleen is my joy and strength – my partner for life.

Respectfully submitted,



LHG

ASST. SUPERINDENDENT/EXEC. SECRETARY



GARY BLANCHARD

How often have you packed the family into the minivan and fifteen minutes down the road been asked, "Are we there yet?"

Author Len Sweet writes, "Journey or arrival? Results or process? Either-or? Both-and? Take a poll of our goal-oriented society, and I suspect a surprising result: The journey-over-destination people would win hands down even while their hands and feet are busy living the 'are we there yet' lifestyle" (11 Indispensable Relationships You Can't Be Without).

The real meaning of life is neither a journey question nor an arrival question. While both are important, the key question is, "Who are you taking with you?" We all need friends on the journey.

STUDYING TOGETHER

The Illinois School of Ministry (ISOM) is a "doing life together" experience. ISOM is especially designed to meet the needs of busy church leaders seeking greater ministry knowledge. ISOM's first year of operation began in January 2008 with 29 students. There are currently 142 students enrolled with nearly 60% participating in classes on a monthly basis. ISOM combines Global University curriculum with a classroom environment for each level of credentialing. All classes are now offered on the campus of Lincoln Christian College. The additional classroom space has allowed us to add a new program that offers a diploma in ministerial studies. In the last year, 32 individuals completed their educational credential requirements through ISOM.

IMPROVING TOGETHER

Last fall we hosted more than 1000 pastors, board members, and leaders from both the North and Central Regions at one of our nine Leadership Banquets. The theme was "Comeback Churches: Turning Your Church Around." The sessions featured a video interview with Dr. Ed Stetzer, president of Lifeway Research and author of a book by the same name. Church leadership teams received a 10-year statistical history of their church and demographic information for their community. These sessions were instrumental in helping leaders address the "Where do we go from here?" questions. This year, leadership banquets will be held in both the Chicago and South Regions.



CHURCH PLANTING TOGETHER

Six new churches were planted in 2008:

- Chicago Tamil Church - Austin Albertraj, pastor
- Peoria Living Grace Church - Andy Brown, pastor
- Peoria Hilltop Campus Church - Kip Perhay, pastor
- Chicago Christ Center of Hope - Leeford Boohene, pastor
- Mt. Prospect Bethesda Assemblée du Dieu Haitienne - seeking a pastor
- Washington Park Living Word Assembly of God - Tommy Smith, pastor

The 2008 church plants are not only reaching a wide variety of communities and ethnic groups, but also represent multiple church planting efforts that include pastor-led church planting efforts; team-based church planting; ethnic fellowship church planting; and multi-church-supported planting efforts.

Dozens of studies find that newly planted churches gain more of their new members – 60 to 80 percent – from the ranks of the unchurched while established churches gain 80 to 90 percent of their new members by transfer from other congregations. We must be motivated by the potential harvest.

This September we will host a Church Planters Boot Camp. This event is not only for church planters but also for those involved with church revitalization. So whether you're planting a church, thinking about planting a church, or in the process of leading your church to health, this should be a "must attend" event on your calendar. Dates are September 7-11, 2009, at Lake Williamson Christian Center in Carlinville.



FAMILY FEST MORNING BIBLE STUDY

WORKING TOGETHER

In October 2008 Anne led her fifth women's mission team. The group of 26 women went to Belize City where they partnered with Illinois missionary Karla Weis. They worked at a Latin American Childcare school, ministering to teachers, parents, and children by providing medical screenings, eye care, haircuts to children and adults, and sewing lessons. This October, the women's mission team destination is Guatemala.

GIVING THANKS

As we've traveled this great state, Anne and I have enjoyed "doing life together" with all of you: pastors, board members, ministry leaders, and the faithful of our congregations. It continues to be a joy to serve with our District Superintendent and Coleen. I'm grateful for the opportunity of working with our Executive Presbyters, District Presbyters, Department Directors, and the staff at the Resource Center. I could never do all that is expected without the gifted team in our Executive Services Department, and am most grateful for their faithful, dedicated service. And most of all, I'm thankful for Anne; we've been doing life together for nearly 40 years!

May the Lord richly bless each of you.



ORDINATION CLASS 2008



2008 WOMEN'S MISSION TEAM TO BELIZE

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES



DENNIS PICKREL

“BUT I DIDN’T KNOW!”

Sometimes we like to live by the rule of “What we don’t know won’t hurt us.” Unfortunately, the laws of the land do not support that philosophy.

Many years ago as I was fishing with a buddy, a game warden informed us we didn’t have proper lighting on our boat. I said, “Sorry, I didn’t know.” He smiled as he said, “Here’s your ticket.”

You may be thinking, “How does this story apply to the church world?” The rules around us are changing, and in many cases are tightening what we can do and how we do it. What we don’t know *can* hurt us. As the Illinois Department of Revenue searches for new sources of income, they are examining not-for-profits and churches more enthusiastically than ever before.

From our perspective, we believe Illinois AG churches are doing most things right, and some are running blind. The most common mistakes seem to be failure to keep up with corporate tax filings; not having a 403b master plan; and not handling employee payroll properly. One pastor recently asked, “What do you mean we can’t make all of our employees salaried? We don’t want to pay overtime.”

TO KEEP UP WITH ALL THESE CHANGES, TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE RESOURCES:

- **Richard Hammar.** The Assemblies of God Fellowship is blessed to have a leading legal expert available as its legal counsel. Richard Hammar publishes comprehensive, easy-to-understand updates. Log on to www.churchlawtoday.com and consider subscribing to Church Law & Tax Report or purchasing the Church & Clergy Tax Guide.

- **Trusted CPA or Attorney.** If you don’t have a trusted CPA or attorney in your church family, establish a relationship with one in your community. Many firms offer discounts to churches and not-for-profits. Discussing an issue in advance with a professional is usually much more cost-effective than paying the consequences “after the fact.”

- **District Office.** Utilize your district office staff. We are here to help. A paralegal and an accountant with a B.S. degree are on the IDC staff, as well as many others with specialized knowledge. Chances are we will have heard your question before. If not, we are very willing to do some research on your behalf.



RICHARD HAMMAR



JULIE MARKESE

REVIVAL

When pastors and church leaders talk about their churches' inability to thrive and grow, they often follow with, "We just need a revival!"

Revival is a form of church revitalization. With assistance from the District Council, several churches took steps this year to revive or revitalize. My work with churches across Illinois has revealed three basic types of revitalization.

RESTORATION

Besides a decline in attendance, these churches may have experienced excessive turnover in pastoral leadership and a sharp decrease in giving. The original condition of the church was sound, vital, and missional until it experienced trauma that threatened its survival. It enjoyed a good reputation in the community until outside circumstances, rather than internal conflict, prevented it from moving forward. Reclaiming what has been lost requires inner work and a change in thinking about the vision and mission of the church. The danger lies in too much nostalgia, where the past is more appealing than the future. Some churches are being restored by re-establishing their reputations through intentional involvement in their communities.

RENOVATION

These churches have plateaued in attendance and find it difficult to challenge members to participate in ministry. Leadership can begin renovation by making changes to the existing church structure, giving it a new and better form. Congregations can reclaim their passion for the work of the Kingdom by redirecting resources and redefining vision. This inner work of shifting to think differently about the church and how it connects to the community requires considerable effort and patience. Some churches have "renovated" their ministries to better reflect their mission. This fosters new leadership and better use of resources for greater impact.

REHABILITATION

To be vital and healthy again may require a total "gut job" and a willingness to lay everything on the table. While being careful to appreciate their historical significance and uphold their values, these churches may need to reconsider everything: church ministries, leadership, goals, and assets. Rehabilitation contemporizes, through alteration or repair, a church that has lost its reason for being as well as its ability to attract or retain new people. Inner conflicts, unclear vision, and unresolved issues require a lot of inner work. Knowing that something is wrong is a major step in the rehabilitation process; asking for help is another. These churches realize it will require all their effort, resources, and resolve to "rehabilitate" and be restored to health and vitality.

The inner work of the church is where real revitalization takes place, and it is demonstrated best, not in structures or strategies, but in people, the most precious commodity of all.

Over the last two years, ten churches around the state have committed to an intensive process of revitalization through coaching. They feel healthier, stronger, and more optimistic about the future. Some pastors now coach other churches that need a helping hand. IDC remains committed to helping every church reach its fullest potential through revitalization.

May we all experience revival in its truest sense!



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



TRACEY ROBERTS

The past year was a whirlwind of activity as we helped churches get their kids "Plugged In & Powered Up" to do service. We visited 23 churches, held six training meetings, went to 16 district events, attended 9 conferences, participated in five networking events, held three kids' events, spoke in five services, went on one mission trip, and led or attended ten camps, for a grand total of 78 events! Whew!

AMONG THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS:

- We visited churches in Metropolis, Fairfield, Berwyn, East St. Louis, Chicago, Gurnee, Palos Heights, Antioch, Marengo, Orchard Valley, Warsaw, Freeport, Rockford, Effingham, Chicago/Belmont, Abingdon, Washington Park, Woodstock, East Peoria/Glad Tidings, and DeKalb. (Partial listing.)
- 126 kids participated in more than 200 events at Kids N Ministry.
- More than 100 teachers attended the Regional Teachers Training blitz in August, learning skills to help them become more effective in discipling their students.
- In February, we were blessed to be a part of the first children's ministers' team ever to go to King's Castle in El Salvador. The team provided training for children's leaders from all over Latin America.

We had a combined total of 1200 campers and 320 workers at our summer camps. Adventure Camp was a big hit! The week included horseback riding at Starved Rock Park (the kids' favorite activity), hiking, and a leadership adventure course led by Jeffery Gosnell of Eagle Crest Adventures. During the evenings, we learned about God's wondrous creation.



MEDAL WINNERS



ADVENTURE CAMP HORSES

ICM's focus for 2009 is "Reset...A Fresh Start with God." Each ministry will "cross-pollinate" with other ministries to raise the bar of family ministry. Examples: Royal Rangers staff will train children's leaders in safety and learning styles. JBQ leaders will teach parents how to incorporate Bible memorization into the daily lives of their children. BGMC will raise funds for drug awareness.



KIDS N MINISTRY ENTRANTS



CRAFT PROJECT



SWIM TIME



PINK GOOP



BARNQUEST



WINTER CAMP TABLE GAMES

Six churches invited us to do evaluations and training. These two-day events involved eavesdropping on teachers, hanging out with the kids, identifying “scary places” in the church, giving current demographics and spiritual statistics of their areas, and helping them establish policies and procedures for their children’s ministries.



WINTER CAMP DORM



JBQ QUIZ ZONE



KIDZONE POWER

STUDENT MINISTRIES



PAUL HINZMAN

“ON THE JOURNEY TOGETHER”

Most Christians can remember the exact moment when God first captured their hearts, with some even recalling the message’s content as they re-live that life-changing experience. I pray this will be the case for the 300 students who made first-time commitments to the Lord, more than 250 students baptized in the Holy Spirit, and over 100 students who were called to be pastors, evangelists, and missionaries, all during just two weeks of camp and two days of Momentum!

We also praise God for our Speed the Light missions giving. Churches have truly risen to the occasion in raising finances that will provide creative communication and essential transportation for our missionaries, so they may see lives changed and souls saved. The transition to make the process more relational and less like a program or fundraiser has proven to be a key element for future success. I encourage you to connect first-hand with our missionaries via the new Speed the Light website at www.ilstl.com.

It would be neglectful not to mention how well our students fared during the 2008 Fine Arts season. Over 500 students used their God-given gifts of performance in a variety of categories. Congratulations to the following students who placed in the Top Ten at our National Fine Arts Festival in Charlotte NC: Caitlyn Gauthier (digital photography and t-shirt design) from Calvary Church/Naperville, Brock Bennett (Wind/Brass Solo) from First Assembly/Pawnee, and East to West Sign Language Group from First Assembly/Minier. Let’s all be instrumental in helping students to discover, develop, and deploy their talents and gifts for kingdom purposes.

The development of incredible relationships throughout the state has been the greatest win for Student Ministries. Through these relationships, we have begun to restructure and retool the footprint of Illinois Student Ministries. I believe we are moving in the right direction by connecting churches and leaders with others. What better place to be than in knowing we are all a part of something much greater than ourselves?

This illuminating principle has given shape to our main focus in 2009: that we would develop a community of pastors and leaders who are “on the journey together.” I’m passionate about coming alongside churches and student ministries to help bring health and vibrant ministry. This exciting ministry environment will be further enhanced by region specialists who are willing to train leaders. We all need wonderful relationships that provide fresh perspective and insight on how to make our ministries more effective.





YOUTH ALIVE

*When I think of Youth Alive in 2008, the word “MULTIPLY” comes to mind. This past summer during two weeks of camp, Youth Alive began to train just over 300 students in what it means to be a Campus Missionary. At Momentum Convention in October, nearly 400 students were commissioned to taking the gospel to their school campuses. I believe that equipping and empowering students is essential to seeing our efforts “MULTIPLY” for the kingdom. In 2009, I look forward to providing regional campus missionary training that is designed to support our pastors and student leaders in their efforts to help reach their communities and schools. I believe we will see God move through a generation that is willing to personally take their faith to their world. Youth Alive is laying foundational blocks in place to see a multiplication of students begin to reach their school campus, **their** mission field.*

*Mike Trevino
Youth Alive Missionary*

What will ministry look like if we can regenerate that kind of synergy? How many more lives can be captured? Though He certainly doesn't need our help, it has been God's plan from the very beginning to use us through relationship. In the words of Humphrey Bogart in the classic movie *Casablanca*, “I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship!”

Of course, we have One who can give more than we could ever ask, imagine, or dream as we journey together!





BRIAN & MELODY
WHIDDEN

A PARTNER FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

Exodus 17:10-13 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up - one on one side, one on the other - so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

This story and the experiences we have had with HomeFront have taught us this core belief: Everybody needs somebody, sometime.

Inevitably, we all have times in our lives when we need an Aaron or a Hur to help us through those challenging moments. It was our joy and privilege to journey along life's pathway with many IDC ministers during times of joy and seasons of sorrow in 2008.



- We celebrated with ministers and PKs who exchanged sacred vows of marriage.
- We rejoiced over the births of new PKs, pledging the District's support to ensure the spiritual training of young families.
- We taught marriage seminars at churches desiring to enrich their homes.
- At District Council, we gave out resources designed to enrich the personal, family, and ministry lives of IDC ministers.
- We made countless hospital visits to ministers with physical challenges.
- We walked through the valley of death with 50 ministers whose loved ones were called home.

The annual PK Retreat proved to be a highlight of the year. *Servolution Revolution* took LWCC by storm the second weekend of October, with 200 PKs and staff converging for a life-changing weekend. The pinnacle of the weekend was a stirring saxophone performance by Brock Bennett, National Fine Arts Champion. God met us in holy times of challenge around the altars. PKs will attest to the fact that it's a weekend unlike any other. Many return in later years as staff members in an effort to give back a portion of what they received at PK Retreat.

IT'S NOT JUST THE DESTINATION...IT'S THE JOURNEY!





BARRY SINK

CHARTING A NEW COURSE! CHANGE! VISION!

These words capture the essence of the first year of i-Connect, a new initiative to connect pastors and families with one another through relational settings. Leading this ministry has been both exciting and rewarding. Our first year exceeded all projections, largely because YOU recognized the need for connections. There are currently 41 teams and more than 200 individuals involved in i-Connect groups.

Revitalization of churches across Illinois ranks as one of IDC's primary missional goals, with i-Connect playing a pivotal role. We're hearing positive reports of how ministers are being impacted through i-Connect teams. A few examples:

- Two pastors in neighboring communities teamed up to co-host a public concert...the result of an i-Connect discussion.
- A church staff member twittered (twittering is a ramped-up version of texting) his i-Connect group during a staff meeting where he had just been given a holiday assignment. Before leaving the table, several i-Connect friends had already communicated ideas back to him. Partnership was immediately developed toward a ministry goal...a relational connection.
- A pastor led a work team from his church to help a fellow i-Connect member during the spring floods that hit western Illinois...a relational connection.
- A minister shared his need for ministry resources. A team member provided those materials, which were no longer being used in his church...the result of an i-Connect exchange.



i-Connect Website

<http://iconnect.idcag.org>

You can search for a group by the map option or the group listing



MOVING FORWARD!

The word "cooperative" is one of the great words that defines our Fellowship. I see 2009 generating deeper partnerships and a "team" approach to ministry that will improve the health of our ministers and churches, create greater reach into our communities, and encourage a release of valuable resources.

- **Mission.** Teams to take on a greater missional role through personal and church revitalization.
- **Flow.** A greater release of resources through partnerships.
- **Connection team.** An i-Connect point person who will focus on key geographical zones.
- **Quantifiable growth.** With God's help, reach a target goal of 80 teams and 600 individuals involved in i-Connect ministry.
- **Affinity groups.** Interfacing staff pastors with i-Connect, focusing specifically on youth and children's areas, and offering additional groups for ministry-specific roles.
- **Web development.** Implementing the second phase development of the website which will focus on leadership support and resources.
- **Diversified training.** Web-based training vignettes; teleconferencing; e-newsletter; SKYPE sessions, region training sessions.

NEW LIFE MEDIA NETWORK



BARRY COPELAND

New Life Media has flourished over the past few years, with 2008 our best year yet. People keep asking why. There are a number of reasons, but three core values drive us: 1) prayer; 2) doing things that matter; 3) working as if it is all up to us, but praying as if it is all up to God.

PRAYER:

It may sound simplistic, but prayer is the foundation for everything. It started with a network-wide day of fasting on May 15, 2005. Within two weeks, major breakthroughs began to happen, which forced us to make tough decisions. I'd like to think we were disciplined enough to do it, but God proved during that summer that this was His ministry, not ours, and that He is in charge.

When people ask me what I do, I hesitate to say that I'm in "Christian Radio." We are so much more than that, and that's exactly why the ministry is thriving.

DOING THINGS THAT MATTER:

We can't afford to waste time or effort; there are too many souls on the line. Our actions, or lack thereof, may determine where someone spends eternity.

If we want the world's respect, we have to do Christ-like things. Actions communicate louder than words. If people respect our actions, they'll be more likely to hear what we are saying.

NOTES FROM LISTENERS

This morning I woke up to WCIC and heard a song. It hit me straight in the heart. You see, I was planning to have an affair, but hadn't taken that step yet. I have a great husband and four wonderful children, but I was looking for something I thought I was missing. This song, "One Life to Love" by 33 Miles warned me and gave me the chance to not have to be praying for a second chance. God gave it to me. Thank you.

Anonymous from Galesburg

My mother and father are having marital problems. My mom has been dealing with most of this by herself. I don't know what she would have done without your radio station allowing God to help her deal with this problem. There have been days that she was so depressed and didn't want to go on, but she did. I never walked into the house over the last few months that your station wasn't on. Thank you for being on the air.

Theresa of Jerseyville



HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES FROM 2008 OF DOING THINGS THAT MATTER:

- **Purity Banquets.** Fathers escorted their daughters to wonderful banquets where both focused on commitments to purity.
- **Single Moms Saturday.** Single mothers brought their cars for oil changes and other basic repairs. One even received a new exhaust system.
- **Random Acts of Christmas.** Our listening audience nominated hundreds of families as needy and deserving. In all, 500 families were blessed by our listeners with an amazing celebration of Christ's birth. One Iraq War veteran was gifted with a vehicle when we learned he had no way to get to job interviews.
- **Backyard Bounce.** Our announcers took the message of Christ to the streets, meeting at different locations around the state where kids were playing. We did live broadcasts and asked the neighbors to give up their spare change. Nearly \$5,000 was collected and sent to an orphanage in Haiti.
- **Missions.** Our stations not only give financial support to AG missionaries, but also give listeners an opportunity to sponsor children overseas. We collected donations of more than 30,000 Bibles and shipped two semi-truck loads to countries where Bibles are scarce. Mission trips to third-world countries are being planned for 2009.

WORK AS IF IT IS ALL UP TO US.
PRAY AS IF IT IS ALL UP TO GOD.

Work as if it is all up to us. There is never a good reason to do something half-heartedly. As Christ's representatives, we must work hard. The New Life Media team gladly crawls into the trenches and does the work that many will not, and a servant attitude is key. One isolated example: Our staff drove around Illinois to pick up the Bible donations, personally stacking the Bibles on pallets and loading them onto the semis with forklifts.

God, in all His power, has handcuffed Himself to us to get things done, and we know it. So the team works extremely hard. We are His hands and feet.

By doing things that matter to the best of our abilities, we have been blessed.



Praying as if it is all up to God allows our works to be effective. This is done with daily prayer at our studios, along with a day of fasting each month. Every day we hear from listeners needing prayer, with our prayer teams petitioning God on their behalf. Last year, over 14,000 people contacted us for prayer, many of them feeling as if they had no other place to turn.

Why call a radio station? Nearly one-third of the 330,000 people listening every week do not attend church anywhere, so they call us to pray with them. When the prayer is over, we urge them to find a church that can come alongside them.

If the principle of supply and demand applies to ministry, there is plenty of demand out there. People are hurting, and they just need to see that we are what we say we are. If we work hard in doing things that matter--doing them well--and cover those things in prayer, the community will demand that our ministry grows.

We are more than "Christian Radio," more than music and microphones. We are a ministry that is impacting lives every day.

CONFERENCE & RETREAT MINISTRIES



STEVEN D. EVANS

IT WAS A "BUILDING YEAR"

The past year has been a "building" year for Conference & Retreat Ministries as we focused on developing the abundant resources God has placed in our care. In 2008 we marked tremendous milestones in team building, guest services, and outreach to other AG ministries.

We finished construction projects for the BarnQuest High Ropes course and Auditorium annex. Many of our new meeting spaces in the Activity Center which were opened in 2007 are already being used to capacity!

BUILDING TEAMS TOGETHER

Eagle Crest Adventures, our team-building ministry, served a combined 2,765 guests at Lake Williamson and Cedar Creek in 2008. We work closely with each group's leadership in laying out the team building event, customizing the experience to each group's individual goals and objectives. During their event, guests are divided into small groups of 8-10 people and guided through the challenges by trained facilitators. This year we led youth groups, teachers, church ministry teams, and college student organizations through the courses.

2008 marked the grand opening of Eagle Crest Adventure's BarnQuest team building course, which happens in the historic barn at Lake Williamson formerly known as the "Mootel." This revamped facility features eight indoor high elements, a full low elements course, and three additional high ropes elements on the outside tower. A dual 300-foot zipline and rock climbing gyms are planned for the future. BarnQuest is the Midwest's only indoor high ropes course that is team-oriented. Its unique design allows us to offer groups a one-of-a-kind experience that focuses on improving interpersonal relationships, increasing self-confidence, and enhancing problem-solving skills.

BUILDING UP AG MINISTRIES

In 2008, Lake Williamson established a partnership with the Indiana District as a commissioned sales and marketing firm and property management consultant. This enables us to bring long-term strength and viability to both of our ministries. We expect more progress in 2009 as we develop Midwest Christian Retreats, a marketing firm for midwest AG camps.

BUILDING UP OUR GUESTS

With a goal of providing the best facility and guest services in the Midwest, our staff has adopted Galatians 5:13 as our guest service motto: "Serve one another in love." Anyone can provide a warm place for a guest; it's the "people factor" that makes the difference. Our staff strives to share Christ with every guest through our care of the facility, a warm welcome at the front desk, and careful planning and implementation of their retreats. Off-site ministry is a powerful tool for churches, as it offers participants a chance to get away, be refreshed, and become reconnected to God and their church family.

Lake Williamson continued to expand its service to the Christian community. Our ministry to outside guests not only provides a quality retreat experience to other Christian churches and organizations, but also allows us to provide the Illinois District and its churches with deep discounts.



Illinois Assemblies of God
FOUR REGIONS



chicago

north



central



south





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