

**MINUTES OF THE
SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
MICHIGAN REGION OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH
MAY 2, 2017
First Meeting**

- PRAISE AND WORSHIP:** The Conference began with singing and worship led by Josh Sabo and the Colonial Woods worship team.
- CALL TO ORDER** The first meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.
- WELCOME AND PRAYER** Rev. Phil Whetstone prayed and brought greetings from our host church, the Colonial Woods Missionary Church, Port Huron, Michigan
- GREETINGS** Mr. James Freed, Port Huron City Manager, brought greetings to the Conference. There are many needs in communities today, but the government can reach only so far in meeting those needs. This is why our churches and faith communities are so crucial. He encouraged us to go home and connect with our community leaders. He stated that our duty is fulfilled in service to one another. We need to affirm the dignity of all lives--the poor, vulnerable and the addicted.
- THEME MESSAGE
“LISTEN UP!”** Regional Director, Jim Keller, led us in prayer. He then spoke to us on the theme “Listen Up!” which was based on Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Mark 12:29-30. When Jesus was asked “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” He took the opportunity to summarize his Kingdom message through the “shema,” a Hebrew word for an urgent call to listen. It is a capsule of truth to recite every day and pass on to your children in creative ways. It was an alert to focus and a call to put God at the center of everything. It was a statement that God is the only true, Almighty God and that he is our life and without him we don’t have a life. All and every part of us is to be at attention and devoted to the Lord, “heart,” “soul,” “strength,” and Jesus added, “mind.” This encounter with the teacher of the law ended up being positive, but the common response to Jesus was skepticism, jealousy, hatred, and eventually they incited the crowds and killed him.
- What is the big picture here? When Jesus was here he alerted people to **Listen Up!** Jesus was always challenging people and leading them into change. He asked questions. If you don’t like change, then you will not be comfortable following Jesus. He is not a bully, but he is tenacious and intentional. He is the Master disciple-maker! As we watch Him with his followers, he is always modeling and presenting a better way.
- Rev. Keller believes that if Jesus were here today, based upon his life, his teachings and the written Gospels, among other things, he might challenge the Michigan Region people about, rigidity, timidity, and isolation.
- Listen Up! When we follow Jesus:**
- Rigidity turns into Flexibility.** Following Jesus means we are students who are open and teachable. Rigidity is one the greatest enemies of the church. When we’re rigid the Lord can’t work on us, in us or through us. When we’re flexible, teachable, and disciplable, he can transform us to think, obey, live and lead like him.

-Timidity turns into Courage. Following Jesus is for the strong and noble. It's demanding and challenging to live and lead for God. Walking and living in the Spirit moves us forward on mission with bravery and confidence. Do you ever feel stuck or stale in your faith-walk? You could be only one courageous decision away from your way out of the mud of timidity.

-Isolation turns into Connection. Jesus called his followers to live their lives "out there". Over and over they watched him connect with people and over and over they were shocked at how he did that and with whom. He withdrew sometimes and balanced his life, but the book of Acts wasn't going to happen unless his followers learned from him how to engage with people and make new friends.

Let it be said of you and of us together, that we are followers of Jesus Christ who are teachable, leadable, courageous, and open to connect with people who are not part of us.

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Rev. Jeff Hossler led us in a time of prayer and reflection.

PRESIDENT OF THE MISSIONARY CHURCH USA

Rev. Steve Jones reflected on the life of Martin Luther. As a young man he loved music and played guitar. He hated school. His father was strict and decided that Martin should leave music and go to law school, which he did. Martin became an astonishing debater on the fine points of the law. While riding his horse one day he found himself in the middle of a terrible storm. He cried out to a saint, "If you will help me I will devote myself to the life of the church." He was helped and followed through with his promise by pursuing theological studies and later teaching doctrine. Martin Luther was 20 years old before he saw a Bible. However, when he finally got a Bible he could not get enough as he read it. He was thus enabled to love the Lord His God with his mind. The more he read the Bible--the more things began to come into his mind. If this Bible was right, then the existing church had drifted away what the Lord wanted. Martin saw himself as a representative of the church so things began to happen in his mind. He saw that some of the Catholic doctrines were unbiblical. He felt he needed to alert the church. However, his efforts were rebuffed. So he wrote down 95 talking points (theses) on things the church needed to correct. He asked for a meeting with the church leaders. The problem was none of them showed up at the meeting. He meant to start a discussion. Finally, he nailed his theses to the door of the church. He wanted to start a debate. His timidity had turned into courage through the Holy Spirit. That was 500 years ago--1517. He was proving that the church had drifted away from the theology of the Bible.

At this same time the Guttenberg printing press was invented which had a great impact. Providentially, someone saw the 95 arguments written in Latin by Luther and they were translated into German and Guttenberg printed them. They were then distributed and became a truth "bomb" which "exploded" with a mushroom cloud of impact when people discovered the truth of what God wanted them to do. Some priests couldn't read so they created things in their imagination such as purgatory and indulgences. Luther and the Roman Catholic church got into a "shoot-out." The Pope excommunicated him and wanted to see him killed. His friends took him to a castle where he remained for several years. It was here that he translated the Greek

New Testament into German so that people could read it. When it was printed it was the second truth “bomb” that fell on Germany, Europe and the world. Correct thinking changed the world forever. People could read the Bible for themselves. This is the story of the Reformation of the church. It was the formation of the right doctrine after the Dark Ages. Why tell this story? Because, God is up to it again!

When teeth need straightening we go to an orthodontist. When Martin Luther translated the Bible people got orthodoxy--(right teaching) and orthopathy (a heart right with God). People were broken--people were saved--the missionary movement was born. Now God is calling the church to orthopraxis (the right practice). Today churches are shaken by the fact that any and all Christians can lead their friends to Christ. We try to lure people into the church which is a pre-Martin Luther idea. We think if we can get people into church, then the pastor can lead them to Jesus. This is not a bad approach but it is not the full re-formation of the church. This was never God’s plan for the church. The church took over Rome when there were no buildings. We need to admit that the church is not a place for non-Christians.

The great revivals have never been church building oriented. Wesleyan revivals started in the parks. The Salvation Army started when people took to the streets. The Great Awakenings in America took place in camp meetings in the woods. Why? Great revivals began when the church went out to where people lived, worked and played. We are in a great re-formation where God is moving us out of the church building into the world!

**INTERACTION
AND FEEDBACK
ON ADDRESS**

Rev. Dan Hamrick led us in a time of interaction and feedback on the address given by Jim Keller and Steve Jones. Several responses were shared with the conference.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting #1 adjourned to breakout sessions at 11:02 a.m.

**MISSION
DISTRICT/
NETWORK
BREAKOUT
SESSIONS**

The following Mission District/Networks met in sessions:
Detroit Metro Network
Thumb Network
West Michigan District
Bluewater Network
Northern Network
Central Area

The following questions were discussed in the Breakout Sessions:

- If your church or the church in general is a factory, what kind of Christian is it producing? How does that person live and for what do they live?
- For what purpose do we win people to Christ and make disciples according to Acts 1:7? The church, or the world? ...just think out loud and process this.
- Why do we as a people seem to be so isolated from unchurched, secular people and culture?
- What will it take for us personally and for us as a church, to become less isolated from lost people and more connected with our environment and the society around us?
- What changes would it involve for your church to become a

disciple-making church, where followers of Christ become more interactive and focused upon “fishing for people” than living only for themselves?

Disciple-making Culture Profile

What does it look like?

How do you know it’s there?

How do the people think who make up disciple-making culture?

When there is a culture of disciple-making:

1. Believers in Christ understand themselves to be **“followers” of Christ**. Followers are committed students of Christ and his process of change in their lives from the inside out.
2. There is evidence of **the power of the Holy Spirit** as Christ-followers reach out and interact with others.
3. Followers of Christ understand they have a commission to be **“on mission”**. This calling belongs to all Christians, not just the pastor and missionaries, etc.
4. Gathering as followers is preparation for **scattering and sending**.
5. Evangelism is understood to be included within the discipling process.
“Disciple-making is defined as intentional involvement in some aspect of helping people move from pre-Christian to devout Christian to reproducing Christian.”
6. Christ-followers commit themselves to a lifetime of developing the skills necessary to engage people in **Spirit-led conversations**.
7. **Leaders are engaged in disciple-making** and new leaders arise from the discipling process.
8. **Life-on-life modeling** is at the heart of relational disciple-making.
9. Disciple-makers understand the power of **focusing upon a few**.
“More time with fewer people equals greater results.”
10. There is an understanding of the long-term power of **generational multiplication** of disciples and churches.

Compiled and composed by J. Keller

Second Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The second meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.

CONFERENCE BAR

The Conference Bar was established by unanimous consent.

CONFERENCE APPOINTMENTS

Parliamentarian: Rev. Karl Yoder

Rev. Jonathan Boyer

Conference Program Manager: Dr. Alan Yerke

Asst. to the Regional Oversight Council Secretary: Rev. Dave Engle

Recommendations/Resolutions Committee: Rev. Doug Connelly, Chair; Rev. Ron Boggia; Pastor Geri Rinke

Introductions Committee: Rev. Brent Kreisch, Chair; Rev. Brian Ake

Credentials Committee: Rev. Bart Adams, Chair; Regional Resource Center Staff

Tellers – Ushers – Greeters: Rev. Matt Mendenhall, Chair.; Rev. Chelsea Henion, Asst. Chair.

RULES OF ORDER The Rules of Order were presented in the Handbook to the Conference

RESOLVED: that we accept the Rules of Order. Approved by unanimous consent.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The Report of the Credentials Committee was presented as follows:

Ordained Ministers (64)

Licensed Ministers (19)

Licensed Lay Pastors (5)

Lay Delegates (43)

Regional and Denominational Leaders various guests and vendors (11)

Total voting members: 142

This report was received into the record by unanimous consent

INTRODUCTIONS COMMITTEE

The report of the Introductions Committee was presented by Rev. Brent Kreisch

The following guests were warmly welcomed by the Michigan Region:

Rev. Steve and Sue Jones (President of the Missionary Church)

Dr. Gregg and Tammy Chenoweth (President of Bethel College)

Rev. Robert Ransom (Director of U.S. Ministries, MCUSA)

Rev. Tom Swank (Director of Prayer Ministries, MCUSA)

Ed and Judy Sayre (Mancelona Camp Caretakers)

Don Pierce and Jared Short (Pierce Carter Agency, representing Brotherhood Mutual Insurance)

Roy Yanke and Mark Urich (PIR Ministries-Pastor's in Residence)

Deb Lee and Chanel Sheofsky (Total Benefit Systems)

Adam Crumpton (Field USA in Detroit)

Paul and Jessica Dietzel (Faith Family Church, Corunna, Michigan)

Carlos and Ruth Medina (World Partners Missionaries to Spain)

REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORT

Rev. Jim Keller presented his report. He highlighted who we are and what motivates us in the Missionary Church. Vision on point:

-Every believer a Spirit-empowered follower of Christ.

-Every follower of Christ a disciple-maker

-Every church a disciple-making, church planting church

What characterizes a culture of disciple-making?

The Xcellerate Map Exercise was distributed and discussed by Rev. Keller. We were challenged to reach out to those who are right around us!

Report was received into the record by unanimous consent.

MEMORIAL REPORT

The Memorial Report was presented by Rev. Jim Keller and Rev. Larry Van Slambrook. A prayer of thanks was given for the life and ministry

of Rev. Jerry Lerche.

- INTRODUCTIONS** Dr. Al Yerke introduced new pastors and staff to the Conference.
- APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE REPORTS** The following Committee reports were presented to the Conference: Regional Director (Rev. Jim Keller), Regional Ministries Coordinator (Dr. Al Yerke), Regional Oversight Council (Rev. Larry Van Slambrook), Ministry Multiplication Team (Rev. Josh Hossler), Metro Detroit Network (Rev. James Thompson); Strengthening the Local Church Team (Dr. Al Yerke), Healing, Encouragement, and Reconciliation Team (Dr. Al Yerke), Happy Time Children's Camp (Rev. Justin Kuhl), Brown City Camp Board (Kurt Tuckey), Mancelona Camp Board (Wayne Fries), Pastoral Benefits Committee (Rev. Jim Keller), Committee on Ordination and Licensing (Dr. Al Yerke), Christian Ministries Institute (Rev. Doug Connelly), Regional Building Committee (Walt McLavy), Nominating Committee Report (Rev. Jeff Hossler), Michigan Missionary Loans and Investments-President's Report (Don Faupel, President), MML&I-Secretary's Report (Gordon Gingrich), MML&I Auditor's Report, Michigan Region Auditor's Report, Treasurer's Report (Harlan Gingrich).
- RESOLVED: to adopt the above Reports. **M/S/A**
- CONFERENCE BALLOT** Under the leadership of the Vice-Chairman of the Regional Oversight Council, the ballot was presented for members of the Regional Oversight Council, Brown City Camp and Mancelona Camp Board.
- 2017 BUDGET** Harlan Gingrich presented the proposed budget for the year 2017 and responded to various questions. Following a comparison to the 2016 budget, several items were highlighted. The Vice Chair of the Regional Oversight Council led the vote regarding the Proposed 2017 Budget.
- RESOLVED: to adopt the 2017 Conference Budget. **M/S/A**
- NEW BUSINESS** Recognition was given to the newly organized Thumb Network by Rev. Jim Keller and Rev. Reg Courliss
- Rev. Tom Swank made a presentation to the Conference on the National Conference Prayer Ministry.
- ADJOURNMENT** Meeting #2 adjourned at 2:35 p.m.
- MML&I MEETING** Don Faupel conducted the Annual Business Meeting and elections of the MML&I officers. Following the President's, Secretary's and Treasurer's report a unanimous vote was cast for the following laypersons: Al Hobson, Ryan King and Derek Tunison. Clergy: Jonathan Boyer
- Third meeting**
- CALL TO ORDER** Meeting #3 was called to order at 3:08 p.m.
- ELECTION REPORT** Regional Oversight Council:
Clergy: Rev. Doug Connelly and Rev. Dan Hamrick
Layperson: Steve Severance

**RINKE
INTERVIEW**

Rev. Keller conducted an interview with Dale and Geri Rinke from the Orchards Community Church. They have been working with churches in a counseling and mentoring way. Their goal is to come alongside churches and help them fulfill God's will for their life and ministry. Even though there are approximately 3,000 churches closing each year many churches are growing and reaching people. The Rinkes indicated that they work with churches to reach more people. We need to think differently. An illustration was used of a canary which was once used to alert miners to the presence of methane gas. We must be on the alert and face realities. The Lord wants us to follow Jesus' example! An eye-opening Video was shown of a street survey conducted by the Rinkes. One of the conclusions that can be drawn from these interviews is that people want to be loved. We need to get out there and be Jesus to people--reaching out, loving people, one on one which is why Crossbridge exists--for the Kingdom!

**BETHEL
COLLEGE
HIGHLIGHTS**

Dr. Gregg Chenoweth, President of Bethel College, greeted the Conference. A video was shown. Bethel is our one college. A copy of Christ at the Helm (a history of Bethel College) had been distributed to Conference pastors. He stressed the fact that this is not just a book of history but an avenue of memory begetting imagination. This is a collection of God's faithfulness over the years that will make us think of God's work in our lives and enable us to look at the future! At Bethel there has been a great push in discipleship which has resulted in a 30% increase in discipleship. This year there were 460 graduates. 93 students attended from countries all over the world. Imagine what that may mean in terms of impact for Christ in the world! He encouraged us in our churches to be advocates for Bethel College!

**DANIEL
VANDOCK
INTERVIEW**

Jim Keller conducted an interview with Dan Vandock who is planting a church in Alanson, Michigan. In moving forward in this work a launch team is being gathered, work is being done on core values, and emphasis is being placed on discipleship. Work is being done with people who have come to Christ in the last couple of years. Two Generate training sessions have been conducted. Currently they are holding mini-services each week before they begin their launch. There is a requirement that every person goes out and has a spiritual conversation! God had been working out details before they actually began. God is opening the doors and will provide opportunities to reach others if we are willing to go.

**JIM THOMPSON
TESTIMONY**

Rev. James Thompson shared with us his experience in disciple-making. We need to have a passion for discipleship. If we don't know how to disciple we're not ready for Revival. He prayed for several months for someone to disciple and God gave him a Roman Catholic man with whom he meets twice a month. The Holy Spirit wants to do just-in-time instruction. This man invited another fellow who is the full-time music director at a local church. Rev. Thompson said the Holy Spirit is leading but Jim doesn't always know where He is going which is exciting!

**CHRIS GLANTZ
INTERVIEW**

Rev. Chris Glantz shared with us what he is doing in discipleship ministry. He has been challenged by the Holy Spirit to reach people outside of the church. He wants to reach the unchurched in places where he can be real with people. He is starting small communities as he tries to work alongside the Holy Spirit. He sees his ministry as more of a movement rather than a church plant. A season of prayer followed for Daniel Vandock and Chris Glantz.

U.S. MINISTRIES

Rev. Bob Ransom, Director of U.S. Ministries shared with us that God has been blessing ministries across the U.S. Following a video presentation it was shared with us that U.S. Ministries is being rebranded "Generate." He reported that one church, that is only 5 years old, already has 4 daughter churches. We are at a time that has not been seen before in the Missionary Church. Currently, there are close to 200 discipling communities that are moving toward becoming new churches which is 5 to 6 times more than we've ever had before. We are seeing more new believers and new networks--over 40+ around the country.

**WORLD
PARTNERS**

World Partners Director, Dave Mann, spoke to our Conference via a video presentation.

**PASTORAL
APPRECIATION**

Rev. Jeff Hossler led in a prayer of thanksgiving for the leadership and commitment of Jim and Brenda Keller and Al and Kim Yerke!

RESOLUTIONS

Rev. Doug Connelly, Chairman, gave the report of the Resolutions Committee which is as follows:

Whereas our Regional Director, Jim Keller, and our President, Steve Jones, have challenged us to make disciples where we live, work and play, and to say with Martin Luther, "Here I stand, I can do no other," be it resolved that we enthusiastically embrace our role in the "Second Reformation" and seek to pursue flexibility, courage, connection, and grace, and to affirm that commitment by proclaiming together, "With God's help, we will."

Whereas Pastor Phil Whetstone and the staff and volunteers of Colonial Woods Missionary Church have graciously hosted this conference and made us feel warmly welcomed, be it resolved that we thank them with an energetic round of applause.

Whereas we have hired so many new associate pastors in the last year in the Region, be it resolved that the retirement age for lead pastors in Michigan be moved up 15 years with full benefits and pension.

At the conclusion of this meeting, be it resolved that any unfinished business of the Conference be entrusted to the Regional Oversight Council for action.

Whereas our denominational leaders have called our churches to prayer in preparation for the National Conference in July, be it resolved that we encourage each of our churches to fervently uphold the Missionary Church before the Lord and that we affirm that commitment with a hearty, "We will."

ADJOURNMENT

The Annual Regional Conference adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Lawrence E. Van Slambrook
Secretary – Regional Oversight Council