

MISSION...

...possible!



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"...with God anything is possible!"

Matthew 19:26

MISSIONWorks To Focus On 'Emerging Church Movement'

MISSIONWorks 2007 will focus on the "emerging church movement" as we ask the question, "How can our churches be more missional than maintenance"? Or stated another way, "How can we move from just existing to being truly effective"?

As we have promoted this conference, people have asked me, "Ken, just what is the emerging church movement"? It is a good and basic question to ask and not an easy one to answer, for the churches who identify with this movement are not monolithic.

What I can say is this: the emerging church is a renewal movement, primarily among mainline churches, that has great appeal to the younger generation of adults in this pluralistic, post-Christian world. It is a faith that has been described as "open and generous, intellectual and emotive, beautiful and just".

Diana Butler Bass, summarizing her recent study of churches, says, "In all the (emerging church) congregations, I discovered Christians who are reaching toward new language to express these ideals, recreating structures that embody spirituality, and relocating themselves in larger, public practices of faith and politics". I favor describing it as a renewal movement that is progressive and yet at the same time a movement that is calling the church back to its biblical base and some of its ancient practices. Some of the signposts of this renewal are hospitality, healing, contemplation, justice, missions, and beauty.

As Bass says, "They (emerging churches) are moving into the future by reengaging their best past. Emerging or reemerging, there is something happening in the pews—something that could transform American Christianity".

So don't miss out! Plan to attend **MISSIONWorks on March 9 and 10, 2007 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel in Fitchburg** to discover what the Lord said to the prophet Habakkuk and I believe says to us today: "I am doing a work in your day which you would not believe if told!" (Hab. 1:5).

Ken Swenson, Director, World Mission Support

MISSIONARIES AND MISSION PARTNERS



Rev. Dr. Jeffrey A. Johnson
National Director of
Evangelism, National
Ministries; Pastor



Rev. Dale Miller
Area Minister in Pennsylvania
Leading authority on the
“Emerging Church”



Rev. Dr. Eleazar Ziherambere
Area Director for Africa



Revs. Debbie & Jim Kelsey
American Baptist Missionaries
Europe



If one word might describe our upcoming MISSIONworks conference it would be **Transition**.

WORKSHOP LEADERS

“The Emerging Church and Evangelism”
Dr. Jeff Johnson

“The Emerging Church and Worship”
Rev. Dale Miller

“The Emerging Church and Spiritual Formation”
Rev. Dr. Conley Hughes

“The Emerging Church and Stewardship”
Rev. Steve Youd

“The Emerging Church and Missions”
Debbie & Jim Kelsey

“The Emerging Church and Youth Ministry”
Julie Sinclair

“Ghana Matters”
Rev. Eleazar Ziherambere and Ghana Team

Where? Best Western in Fitchburg

When? March 9-10, 2007

What? “Missions—What’s Next?”

Lessons from the Emerging Church”

Who? Dale Miller and Jeff Johnson

Watch Out for Those Short-Term Mission Trips

By Rev. Kevin Cross

James writes in his first chapter, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” An avid supporter of short-term mission trips, as pastor I encourage our young people to pray about spending a part of their summer vacation on a missions trip. My prayer is that our young

people will see the needs of the world, and that God will place within their hearts a desire to minister to the oppressed and exploited. My hope is that this desire will spill over into their whole life’s journey so that they (and we) will minister the love of Christ to those around them.

Two of our youth participated in one particular

UPDATE COMMON COMPASSION

The Gospel Center In Sofia, Bulgaria

With receipts still coming in, TABCOM churches have raised for this project approximately \$90,000 toward our total goal of \$100,000. Also, our efforts have triggered a matching gift from a donor in England of \$90,000. The combination of these amounts will enable the façade and windows to be completed by the end of the year, making possible interior work during the upcoming winter months.

*Praise God from whom
all blessings flow!*



mission trip to Haiti. It was certainly a life changing experience for them. They learned that there are people who live in extreme poverty, far greater than those facing hardships in our own country. These teens discovered that they could be a part of the solution to problems in the world. When they came home, they shared many stories of giving and receiving God's love. Some of the pictures were of the orphanages in which they ministered. Seeing dozens of babies lying on mats stirred the hearts of onlookers.

One of those onlookers was my wife, Linda. She is a very compassionate woman, talented in many ways. Immediately her heart went out to those babies, and she exclaimed, "We have to adopt them!" At that time, my thought of a successful mission trip was simply to insert into other people's lives a yearning to minister to those around them, not so much to transform the hearts of those back home. I nicely told my wife that she had a charitable heart, but...

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The orphanage pictures would not leave my wife's thoughts, and soon we were trying to find out how we could adopt one of those orphans. After three years of searching and much praying, we agreed to adopt one child. As we made arrangements for a single adoption, we were asked if we might consider adopting two children.

I was astonished at this idea, since we already had four children, two of whom were adopted. How could we possibly take in a sixth child? But, that Scripture from James kept coming to me. I caved in under my family's arguments that we need to care for orphans, and that God was leading us in this way. We agreed to adopt two children.

When we received the paperwork for the second

child, we discovered she had an older sister. Linda asked when she had been adopted, and we were told, "She's not adopted. At age six, she's too old. Seldom will people adopt an



older child." Well, I'm sure you can guess what happened. We went to Haiti, and returned with not one or two, but with three orphaned children.

Short-term mission trips? I'm convinced they are of extreme value.

You cannot predict how wide the impact will be. We sent two, but returned with three more. A great return on one's investment, wouldn't you say?

Kevin Cross and his wife Linda, and nine children, live in Wales, MA and minister with East Brookfield Baptist Church. They have two biological and seven adopted children.

SUMMARY OF MISSION SUPPORT JANUARY–NOVEMBER 2006

	2006 \$	2005\$	+/- \$ AMT .	MA+/- %
United Mission	536,554	597,316	(60,762)	(10.2)
America For Christ	68,186	86,937	(18,751)	(23.4)
One Great Hour of Sharing ¹	79,655	293,998	(214,343)	(72.9)
World Mission Offering	103,366	68,328	35,038	51.3
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering	28,734	28,171	563	2.0
*Love Gift included in United Mission	15,355	15,371	(16)	(0.1)
¹ The 2005 figure is still Tsunami driven.				