



WHILE THE LORD TARRIES

BY MARK YODER

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A few weeks ago, I was spending some great quality time with a couple of my grandchildren. (I have twenty-five, and one great grandchild, and I promise that I am bragging, not complaining.) And if you must know, that great quality time was on the golf course. I was winning favor with snacks and hugs and driving lessons on the golf cart, and the laughter and joy was infectious. I can't remember how well I was playing that day, but I went home with a warm, fuzzy feeling about my amazing grandchildren.

The next morning, I was having my "habitual" prayer time with my wife, Polly, and was telling God once again that if I was to be his eyes and ears, and hands and feet on this earth, then I was reporting once again that Satan has had long enough to inflict his pain and suffering on people. It has been long enough for the strong to take advantage of the weak, the rich to abuse the poor, and the isolated and lonely to be taken advantage of by those that could, just because they wanted to.

Maturity is coming to understand the wisdom of the ways of God, and the pure delight of making a total surrender to Jesus every day.

Suddenly, I was brought up short, as it seemed to me that God was reminding me of my delightful time with my grandchildren. "Do you wish I had come back years ago when you were asking for this? Even before those precious grandchildren got here?" I felt some chagrin and admitted, "No, I'm most grateful that you have waited this long. I would hate to have missed out on these delightful relationships!" And then I began to think of the fact that God sees every single person who, in the future, will come to him, love him and serve him, and bring him pure delight. I repented for my narrow-minded view and purposed again to do better at telling people the story of Jesus and inviting people to come and enjoy God's favor and love and forgiveness.

CMC has been encouraging us as individuals and churches to have a *mature and multiply* focus. This is a focus that resonates deeply with me. To me, maturity is coming to understand the wisdom of the ways of God, and the pure delight of making a total surrender to Jesus every day. Maturity is giving God everything daily and letting him be the owner, defender, protector, provider of all that I might have foolishly considered my own at one time in my life. Maturity is relaxing and resting as God opens doors, brings me opportunities to share Jesus, and gives me favor in that sharing.

I am convinced multiplication will be a natural byproduct of that kind of maturity. Many more people will come to Jesus, many more will be incorporated into our churches and our own lives. Many more people will live in victory, and our faith will be contagious.

I love the promise of Jesus, when he said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell will not prevail against it!" (Matt. 16:18 KJV). When I was a young Christian, and read that promise, I saw the church inside a safe place with walls and gates. I saw Satan prowling around on the outside, but unable to break the locks and get in. We would be safe as long as we were "inside."

But later I realized that picture is totally wrong. The picture is one where Satan has people in prison, totally deceived and in chains, bound and shackled by strongholds too strong to get out of. But then Jesus comes, and he opens the prison doors, binds up the guards, takes off the chains, and prisoners go free, excited and delighted.



Mark serves as associate pastor of Greenwood Mennonite Church. He and his wife, Polly Heatwole Yoder, own and operate a 56-bed nursing home and a small retirement community. They enjoy their six children, 25 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



Faithful to the Call

BY PHIL SWARTZENTRUBER

In 1955, Martha, recently married to Wesley Stoltzfus and pregnant with their first child, moved from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, to Bowlings Creek in Eastern Kentucky to help with the church plant there. Life in those early years was not easy. In her book *Hope in the Deepest Hollow*, she described her trip as a 23-year-old to the hospital for the birth of her first child. “One afternoon in August, I was spending time with Gertrude (Dutcher) and the three Smith children they were fostering. Without warning, my water broke! I wasn’t prepared for that. ‘What does that mean?’ I asked Gertrude. ‘That means,’ she said calmly, ‘you are going to have a baby and you’d better get to the hospital.’ ‘Oh.’ Gertrude saddled up Bird, the horse, and quickly rode to the mill where Wesley and Frank were working. Wesley came back on the run and helped me into the cab of the truck. ‘I can’t ride here,’ I said. ‘The jostling is too miserable!’ So, I rode in the back, like a cow, flexing my knees against the cruel jolts up Bowlings Creek and down Feb Fork. Our car was parked at Gays Creek. From there we drove 60 miles to Hyden where the Frontier Nurses had a hospital.”

It was [Martha’s] conviction that staying true to the Word would bring maturity in our walk with Jesus.

In 2008, five years after Wesley’s death, Martha moved to Turners Creek to be closer to us. At times she joined our church activities here, but her heart was still at Bowlings Creek. She was faithful to her call. She drove there every Sunday as long as she was able. Then, her church people graciously provided transportation for her.

On March 8, 2022, at the age of 89, Martha, my mother-in-law, left this world to go to her eternal reward. I imagine Jesus saying to Martha, “Well done. For these 67 years you have been faithful to the call I gave you and Wesley to minister to the people of Bowlings Creek. Welcome HOME.”

Martha’s life embodies our CMC commission to *mature and multiply* churches. She spent hours studying, memorizing, and teaching the Bible. She often admonished me to “Preach the Word.” It was her conviction that staying true to the Word would bring maturity in our walk with Jesus. She was

an intercessor, praying for the salvation and other needs of people in Eastern Kentucky and around the world. Martha’s passion to see people come to Jesus never faded. In fact, this passion seemed to intensify as she approached the end of life.

For the last three years, I have had the privilege of serving as moderator of CMC. As my term ends this summer, I am encouraged by what God is doing in and through CMC. We are not a perfect conference, nor are we made up of perfect churches, but we strive to remain faithful to a perfect, compassionate, and powerful God.

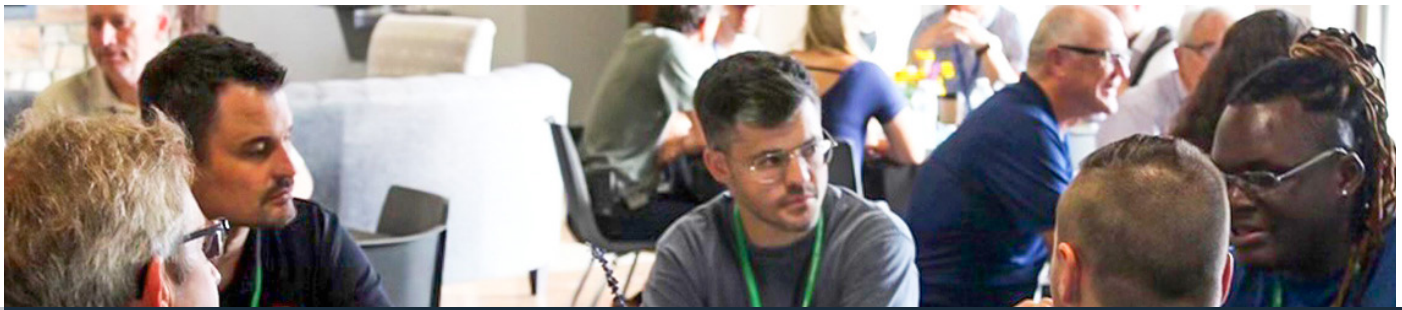
I sense among our churches a strong and growing commitment to the authority of Scripture. In a world that is uncertain about where to find truth, where many adopt God’s Word to fit their desires, I hear over and over from our church leaders, “We have to stay true to God’s Word.”

I am seeing a commitment and passion to take the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that desperately needs to hear. The COVID years have necessitated creativity in the way we do church and mission. There have been coffee-shop Bible studies, on-line church services, disaster-relief ministry, church gatherings in a tent or down by the river. These are a few of the ways our churches are ministering to the body of Christ while making the gospel accessible to people who do not go to church. Jesus came to earth and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. He does not excuse or overlook our sin; he forgives and cleanses us. He sets us free to live a life of holiness. So, the message of the gospel never changes but our methods of presenting the gospel must. I don’t believe Paul did on-line church services in Ephesus! I pray that God will continue to give us creative vision to reach people with the gospel of Jesus.

The Eastern Kentucky churches and Martha’s call came out of a stirring of the Holy Spirit in CMC 75 years ago. God is again stirring us in CMC to take the gospel to our world and plant churches. May we be faithful to this call.



Phil is pastor of Turners Creek Mennonite Church in Jackson, Kentucky, and moderator of CMC. He is a retired high school teacher. He and his wife, Rosie, enjoy time spent with children and grandchildren.



“Mistakes Were Made ...”

(Part 6)

BY JEFF MCLAIN

In How We’ve Done Church — Challenges and Encouragement for Small Churches

“Integrity is the new competence.” Karl Vaters challenged me with this statement as we conversed about the strange new season we’re in as the church. This is an era in which too many churches have been built around personalities, and destruction has abounded. Large, effective ministries have been lost in seconds.

Karl gently reminds us that the church needs to shift from teaching *skill* to developing *integrity and character*. In fact, he suggests that churches double down on discipleship, especially around character. Almost all issues the church faces today result from a breakdown in discipleship. It’s also encouraging to see how people are looking for community in ways they didn’t recognize before.

Small can be strategic, and numerical growth doesn’t necessarily validate a ministry.

For the past decade, Karl has been deeply invested in the discipleship of pastors, especially those serving in smaller churches. Karl has authored four books: *The Grasshopper Myth*, *Small Church Essentials*, *100 Days to a Healthier Church*, and *The Church Recovery Guide*. His upcoming book explores how the church has been trapped by the love for quantitative metrics; a problem that originated with churches in America. It’s yet another expression of the discipleship and integrity issues.

When Karl graduated from Bible college in 1991, colleges and seminaries were not yet overtaken by church growth and its strategizing quantitative metrics. A few years later, church growth became their major focus. But this focus on church growth had unintended consequences. The strategies were not reproducible.

Karl’s journey into “church growth” ended tragically. His church imploded! This failure led him to study and learn what makes for healthy and effective churches. As he came to understand that health and effectiveness aren’t necessarily defined by numbers, he experienced new life in his congregation, a church he still pastors 30 years later.

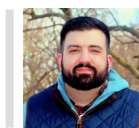
This failure and discovery is what has led Karl to his passionate interest in encouraging and resourcing smaller churches. He finds there is now a growing appreciation for smaller churches. Small can be strategic, and numerical growth doesn’t necessarily validate a ministry. Yet, Karl says this paradigm shift still has room to grow. The majority of resources are still developed for larger churches. As we shared about this topic Karl offered three challenges to the smaller church:

- 1. We must stop looking backwards.** Too many churches want to go back to what was. We want everyone back in the room and programs back the way they were.
- 2. We must see the last two years as a graduate level course on leadership.** The last few years have offered many examples on what *not* to do as a leader. We must be willing to learn from these experiences and not quickly forget and move on.
- 3. We must face the loss of cultural Christianity.** Pre-COVID, many attended church because of the expectation and tradition of cultural Christianity. Thankfully, passionate followers of Jesus are returning to church and redefining ministry.

In our conversation, Karl also offered three encouragements to the smaller church:

- 1. People are recognizing the need for community.** This is a need smaller churches meet well through practices of fellowship. Even larger churches are attempting to reshape themselves with secondary events to meet this need.
- 2. We already have the resources we need.** In a time where many large churches are developing smaller events and venues to meet the needs of people,

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Jeff serves as director of the Training in Ministry program at RBC. He is also Director of Pastoral Ministries at Water Street Mission in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and pastors River Corner Church (LMC). Jeff and his wife, Katie, have three daughters.



Fully Engaged

BY JOE

The other day, my neighbor showed me an unusual sight. In his front yard, under an ornamental bush, sat a duck. She has been sitting there for a few weeks now, and even though the nearest pond or stream is a quarter mile away, this mother will no doubt shepherd her ducklings to the water as soon as they've hatched. When it's time to reproduce, nature often seems to do what it takes.

At Rosedale International, our mission is "to fully engage our churches in maturing and multiplying disciples locally and globally, especially among the least reached." We serve the 100+ congregations of CMC, whose pastoral leadership unanimously agreed a few years ago that our commission from God is to *mature and multiply churches locally and globally*. As CMC's global mission arm, RI shares CMC's commission, and focuses primarily on "the ends of the earth."

God gave us physical human family so we can understand spiritual family.

I love this vision! Out of our own intimacy with God, we expect that what happens naturally in the physical world will also happen spiritually through us. Healthy, fully alive disciples and churches mature and multiply—it's just what happens. What we're pursuing is perfectly normal.

But I think we'd all agree it is *not* normal. Most of us have probably not seen multiplication spiritually like we've seen it physically. Many of our churches have never birthed a daughter church, much less seen a multiplication of churches. Maybe this is a place where we are corporately accepting defeat.

What does it look like to be fully engaged in maturing and multiplying? How will we at RI know if we have been successful?

I have found it helpful to think deeply about what the Bible has to say about the church as a family. It has become clear to me that family is not just a metaphor of what the church is like. It is *by definition* what the church is. Family language is all over the New Testament. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. And

notice, it is not that God is *like* a father, or we are *like* brothers and sisters. It's who he *is*, and who we *are*.

God gave us physical human family so we can understand spiritual family. When he tells us he is our father, we understand what that means—that he birthed us, that he wants to always be in relationship with us, that he wants us to grow and thrive. When he describes us as brothers and sisters, we're able to grasp the concept of "this is my tribe, these are my people."

Paul describes to Timothy how spiritual multiplication takes place: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:1-2 NIV).

Do you see the generations in that statement? "Son, do what I did with you. Share this Jesus life with others who will faithfully do the same. Have your own sons and daughters who will have their own sons and daughters." Paul is envisioning four generations—his spiritual great-grandchildren!

When it comes to maturing and multiplying disciples, we'll be successful when normal has become normal—when every person in every CMC congregation is on the path to fathering and mothering spiritual children, nurturing them to mature and to multiply.

Fully engaged.

In the coming months, RI will release a series of videos in which our Executive Team explores our mission to mature and multiply disciples, especially among the least reached. It is our hope that these videos bring clarity to our work and a deeper understanding of CMC's place in it. They will be available at rosedaleinternational.org.



Joe, president of Rosedale International, has been a CMC minister since 1989. He lives in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife, Janice, and together they lead the Columbus Network of Microchurches.



multiply 2022

July 22-24 | McHenry, MD
Garrett County Fairground

THRIVE

What is the Multiply conference?

An oft-debated question among the planners of CMC's Multiply Conference is, "What is the purpose of our annual gathering?" Is fellowship the primary purpose? Is it to be an equipping event for ministry leaders? Is it meant to be primarily inspirational? Those are all good things, and we hope they all happen at Multiply 2022, but those things can also be experienced at many other conferences. Is there a unique purpose for which we gather each year? We propose that amidst the other reasons we gather, **the overarching purpose is to celebrate our life together as a body and recommit ourselves to the mission to which God has called us.** As a body made up of local churches, a Bible college, and a mission agency, we have stories to tell of God's goodness and how he has been at work in our midst. Let's tell those stories! And let's be inspired to embrace anew our mission to mature and multiply churches locally and globally.

JOIN US JULY 22-24!!
GARRETT COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
270 MOSSER RD
MCHENRY, MD 21541



EXPO BUILDING



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MAIN SESSIONS – Expo Building
Worship Leader – Annette Miller

FRIDAY EVENING 6:30-8:00 pm

Our Stories

As a body made up of local churches, a Bible college, and a mission agency, we have stories to tell of God's goodness and how he has been at work in our midst. Let's tell those stories! And let's be inspired to embrace anew our mission to mature and multiply churches locally and globally.

What It Means to Thrive – Video montage

Children's Feature – Jim Miller

Our Stories

SATURDAY MORNING

Plenary Session 1 9:00 am

Introduction of New Congregations

Moderator's Address – Phil Swartzentruber

Our Stories

Seminar & Table-Talk Session 1 10:15 am

Where Are We Now? Understanding Rural – and Why It Matters – Brad Roth

In this session, we'll look at characteristics of rural and ask how rural's unique contours shape the work of the church. How can we see, love, and impact our communities for the sake of the Kingdom?

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Seminar & Table-Talk Session 2 1:15 pm

More with Less in God's Country – Brad Roth

In this wounded moment, God is calling the church to both more and less: more love for him and passion for sharing the gospel, and a let-go-and-let-God passionate *less* that depends on God's presence and power. How can we learn the art of more-with-less for God in rural places?

Seminar & Table-Talk Session 3 2:30 pm

How to Light a Fire: Prayer in the Rural Church

–Brad Roth

The church is a divine-human alloy guided by the Holy Spirit and sent into the world. Prayer keeps the supernatural nature of the church front and center and fuels God's people for mission. In this session, we'll talk—and practice!—prayer to spark a new fire in our lives and congregations.

Special Events - 4:00 pm

See Special Events box



www.cmcrosedale.org



For more information and to register, visit our website.

SATURDAY EVENING 6:30-8:00 pm

Plenary Session 2

What It Means to Thrive – Video montage

Children's Feature – Jim Miller

Introduction of CMC Church Planting Catalyst

Our Stories

Characteristics of a Thriving Church – Wes Furlong

SUNDAY MORNING 10:00-11:30 am

Children's Church - in children's area

Plenary Session 3

Christmas Project Thank You – Video

Passing of the Baton – CMC Moderators

Our Stories

Video - Rosedale International

God's Mission for the Church – Wes Furlong

YOUTH SESSIONS – Cherry Glade Mennonite Church

Saturday - 10:45 - 3:30 (Lunch c/o RBC @ Cherry Glade)

Theme: *But God...*

Speakers: John Risner, Richard Swartzentruber, Eric Miller, and Keegan Wright

- Spiritual gift testing & identification
- *God's Design for Our Gifts*
- *Practically Using Our Gifts*

Prizes for the largest youth group, most miles traveled, and "coolest" t-shirts

Experience REACH 3:45-4:45 pm for interested young adults

CHILDREN'S CLASSES Nursery - 8th grade

Theme: *A Thriving Spiritual Life*

Registration & Check-In – At the barn-like stage between 4-H Building and Beef Building

Additional care for nursery/preschool children will be available during the Friday and Saturday evening sessions, 6:30-8:00 pm.

To register your children, visit our website.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **CMC Multi-Agency Reception** Friday Evening
- **Second Wind Bluegrass Band** Saturday Evening
- **Hymn sing at the old Cherry Glade Meeting House** Saturday, 4 pm
- **Round Table with RI field workers** Saturday, 4 pm back of Expo building by display tables.
- **Experience REACH - Come see what serving with REACH could look like for you!** Saturday, 3:45 pm @ Cherry Glade

While the Lord Tarryes – continued from page 1

While it is true that Satan still does have many people in chains, and many are still shut away deeply into prisons of addiction and sin patterns that have been in place for many years, also true is the fact that all over the world we are seeing many that are coming out of those chains and are walking in freedom because of the amazing grace of Jesus. They are finding out that God's promises are true, and “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Cor 5:17 NKJV). Old things are gone, and all things are made new. Personally, I believe these deliverances are happening more than any time in the history of the world. Maybe not in percentages, but surely in numbers.

What our God is doing is nothing short of remarkable. Let's not miss out on the opportunities to be part of this great work that God is doing. Let him give us new and creative ways to share Jesus every day!

Mistakes Were Made... – continued from page 3

small churches are already in a space to meet people where they are.

- 3. New things are working, so don't rush back inside the building.** Many smaller churches adapted to the pressures of COVID-19, and found ways to be an effective church outside their buildings. Don't rush back inside the building or to your old ways.

Karl said that ideally smaller churches need to simply focus on doing the stuff that Jesus did. While such a sentiment may feel overly simplistic or idealistic, he reflected on how throughout the past forty years the church has been introduced to a lot of new processes, systems, methods, and toys. Most of those advancements have been highly transformative for the mission of the local church, but some have sadly distracted us from the greatest commandment and commission.

RBC invites you and your leadership team to join us for a weekend of spiritual renewal and restored hope in a retreat Karl will lead on campus, August 18-20, 2022. Let's come together and grapple with these issues as Karl helps us look at God's purpose, heart, and intent for the church.

The retreat will be organized into five sessions:

1. Redefining Success in Ministry
2. Big Churches, Small Churches – What's the Difference?
3. How to Discover and Use What Your Church Does Well
4. Finding and Mentoring Volunteers in the Church
5. What's Working in Churches that Are Thriving?

You can learn more about this event and Karl Vaters online. Register at rosedale.edu/tim/retreat.