

Leadership Seminar Inspires, Connects

Sue Klassen

"I'm deeply committed to the learning community approach," Dave Boshart said—and acted upon—at the Feb. 5-7th Leadership Seminar. Rather than simply telling us about his research in planting missional churches, Boshart made us work. After preparing the theological ground, Boshart gave us case studies of actual churches and had table groups wrestle with questions such



Dave Boshart assists during case studies

as, "What needs to be modeled and demythologized in this situation?" and "What should the leadership of this congregation do in sorting out 'the powers?'"

Boshart used Luke 10—Jesus sending out 72 disciples in pairs—to point out that Jesus instructs the disciples to receive hospitality before they announce the Kingdom of God or do signs. Boshart noted that Mennonites are more accustomed to giving first, but receiving puts the giver in the place of honor. It is important to allow others the opportunity to give—not to charge in with the "fix-it" mentality. As Debbie Brown from Corning said, "Learning the importance of 'befriending your neighbor even if they offer you coffee from a dirty cup' was a key insight.

Throughout the weekend, we participated in different forms of prayer, including with blocks. At our tables, we were invited to place one block on the growing block structure for each silent or spoken prayer we offered. Connecting over meals was also important. "I appreciated the sharing we could do informally as [Women in Ministry] around the lunch table," Janet Lyndaker from Lowville shared.

On Saturday evening, people had the option of participating in outreach projects: a Prayer Drive through Rochester, tying a comforter for Haiti, Bible Study with a group led by Ephraim and Tadelech or participating in worship and serving dinner at the Open Door Ministry. Linda Wright shared her powerful testimony of coming to Jesus off the streets. For

Debbie, serving food, and seeing the connections people made with Linda—calling "Ms. Linda, Ms. Linda!" throughout the dinner, was a highlight.

Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship hosted the weekend. Boshart commented on the missional feel of the sanctuary—windows looking up into the heavens and out into the world. While many contributed to making the arrangements, and providing food and lodging, Jen Carter and Kathy Shelly took the strong lead. As Dorothy Zehr said, "You made it look so effortless, but I know what this takes."

Training and Consultation for Outreach

Sarah Blaisdell

On Sunday, January 17th, transformation teams from the Southern Tier Mennonite churches met at the Jesus Church in Addison for the first session of training and consultation with Dave Eshleman on "Reaching the Unchurched in our Communities." Dave is a church consultant for Lancaster Mennonite Conference and Eastern Mennonite Missions, and has written a book, *Now Go Forward: Reaching out to Grow Your Congregation*, which details his passion, vision, and strategy for reaching the unchurched.

As we train together, each transformation team will learn effective ways to reach out, not just to grow our congregations, but in compassion and concern for reaching the unsaved for Christ. In the first session, Dave talked about our motivation for outreach, our vision/mission/purpose/faith, and how to be a welcoming and assimilating community. In the next sessions, Dave will cover the following topics: Effective Small Groups/Making Disciples; The Worship Service; Equipping People – Gifts Discernment & Empowerment; Effective Leadership in Meetings/Self-Leadership; Helping People Make Changes; Tools for Reaching the Unchurched; Styles of Evangelism; and Understanding Youth.

What I appreciated most was the reminder that the number one emotional response

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Editor: Sue Klassen <sueklassen@gmail.com>

Congregational News Editor: Kirk House <nymclife@yahoo.com>

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Christmas Day Report from Haiti

Well before the January earthquake, Lowville folks built a “pajama tree” for children in Haitian orphanages. Member Nate Herr helped congregational children pack the pajamas before leaving for Haiti with four other Upstate Medical University students. Here are some excerpts from his report.

From my journal (December 25th):

“The beds [at the public hospital] are random, come with or without sheets, and are packed into an open-air hall. Health-care professionals... do their best to round the beds, examine, and move the treatment to the next step.... It is the patients or their family’s responsibility to go and get the x-ray, lab results, medication or cast/plaster material from a pharmacy or lab... and pay for it on the spot. There just isn’t the infrastructure or human resources to provide the connections.”

It was a fragile health-care system to begin with, held together by incredible and intelligent health professionals who had the biggest hearts I’ve ever met.

The following week we visited numerous orphanages, (there are approx 200 such orphanages in Port au Prince, not including the unregistered ones).... We helped perform well-child physicals and observed.... And how could we forget the pajamas? Over one hundred

Lowville’s Pajama Tree for Haitian Orphans



dred were distributed to children we met at the orphanages.

This was all only weeks ago and still alive and vivid in my mind.... So much is unknown at this point as most all communication and infrastructure has been demolished. Today, from reading a combination of primary source blogs and news articles, I’ve concluded that the General Hospital where we spent much time (and donated the medical/surgical supplies) has suffered from severe collapse.

There is no doubt in my mind that there is a stark suffering and an immediate need in Haiti which will require all of our support and graciousness. Please do whatever you feel you can or is appropriate.

Keep praying for Haiti.

Linda Wright at District Women’s Meeting

Kathy Shelly

To help increase participation at New York Mennonite Women’s retreats, we’re trying district cluster meetings. The first, on Saturday May 1 in Rochester, is geared towards western and southern district women. Linda Wright will be our speaker. Mark your calendars now and watch for more details. All New York Conference women are invited and anyone interested in helping plan this and other events should contact Janette Lyndaker or Kathy Shelly.

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of Jesus for the people who surrounded Him was one of compassion, and we need to emulate that. We are involved in the same mission as Jesus and Paul—to reach the lost and bring them into relationship with their Heavenly Father. We have a message of good news to share with all those around us—“God loves you and accepts you.” Dave shared that he daily asks that God will give him the same passion and compassion that He has for people. This is a prayer that we all need to pray.

There will be at least two more sessions over the next few months. The second session will be held at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning on February 28th.

How Are We Helping Haiti?

Edited by Kirk House

Lowville Mennonite participated in several ways to help Haiti’s earthquake victims.

On January 22, over 600 people enjoyed a venison supper at Croghan Mennonite Church, sponsored by the Northern New York State MDS chapter. About \$600 went to Son Light Missions and \$12,500 to MCC.

A U-haul truck was bought and loaded with a large water tank, blankets, sheets, medical supplies, and non-perishable foods, then loaded onto a ship at Miami. Son Light Missions will work with other aid organizations to distribute these supplies. Many from LMC contributed to this effort. LMC gave Son Light Missions \$3000 from their Plus Giving for food.

Our members also supported a spaghetti supper at Naumburg Mennonite Church on January 29th, plus a bake sale and auction at River Valley Mennonite School on Jan. 30.

Our sewing circle is gathering materials to assemble health kits for MCC and have them ready for shipment to Akron in several weeks. Also, a “comfort tying” is planned for Feb. 12-13 for the area churches. These comforters will go to Haiti via MCC.

Jared Zehr spent January 19-26 in Haiti to bring back two young daughters, Jonice and Valerie, he and his wife Shelly adopted some time ago.

A spaghetti dinner on February 9 is planned at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Lowville to benefit Son Light Missions. *Bernadine Schwartzentruber, Paul Schamback, and Wilfred Mayer*

Chenunda Creek Fellowship took a special offering on January 24 for Haiti, which will go to MCC. We are planning to provide relief care buckets which we will fill in the months to come, since we realize the needs will be there for years. *Anne Siegrist*

Rochester Area Mennonite Fellowship collected \$1,162 through a special offering to send to MCC for Haiti. Physician Mark Brown returned on January 22 from assisting with relief work in Haiti. -- *Sue Klassen*

Pleasant Valley donated \$2000 to MCC for Haiti relief. -- *Kirk House*

Save the Dates:

Reaching the Unchurched : Feb. 28, Corning Mennonite Fellowship

Delegate Assembly: March 27, 2010

Celebration 2010: September 17-19, 2010, Penn-York Camp