

### Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders

Conflict is normal and inevitable – whether in the home, school, community, church or workplace. Leaders in all walks of life often have a responsibility to help others work through their conflicts. The Mediation Skills Training Institute presented by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) is designed to equip church leaders with the skills necessary to deal effectively with interpersonal, congregational, and other forms of group conflict. The five-day institute also includes a component on congregational mediation and consultation, placed within the context of family systems theory. Although focused primarily on the church setting, the skills learned are directly transferable to other settings. Thus managers in business, attorneys, experienced mediators, and others in leadership will be enriched by the training as well.

**July 9-13, 8:30AM—5:00PM**  
**Judson Baptist Church**  
**8517 Parkview Blvd., Omaha, NE**

Contact the Region office for more details or to register. Registration is \$695 when paid by June 8th. Pastors: Carpenter funds are available.

### ABC of Nebraska Staff

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 Associate Executive Minister ..... Greg Mamula  
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# the MESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



May/June 2012

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."*  
 Matthew 28:19,20 NIV



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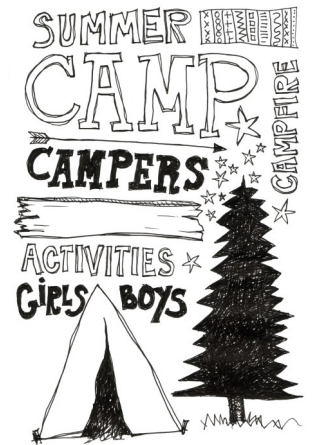
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## Moses Merrill Camp and Conference Center Summer Camp 2012



### Cracking the Code

TREASURES FROM THE PARABLES OF JESUS  
 Storytelling is as ancient as human communication. From writing on the walls of caves to oral tradition, to written words to campfires—stories are how we pass on the meaning of our faith and our history. Jesus used stories called parables to teach his disciples what it means to live as God's people. Join other campers in Christian community this summer to explore some of these parables and how they still impact us today.



Summer Camps 2012	Dates:
Work Project Week	May 20-27
Youth Music & Drama Camp (grades 9-12)	June 10-16
Junior 1 Camp (grades 4-6)	June 17-22
Primary 1 Camp (grades 2-3)	June 22-24
Senior High Camp (grades 10-12)	June 24-29
Family Week	July 1-7
Mid High Camp (grades 7-9)	July 8-13
Junior 2 Camp (grades 4-6)	July 15-20
Children's Music & Drama Camp (grades 4-8)	July 22-27
Primary 2 Camp (grades 2-3)	July 27-29
Specialty Camp/Horse Care (grades 6-12)	July 29-Aug. 3

**JOIN THE 2300 TEAM TODAY!**

From the Executive Minister . . . . . Robin Stoops

The C's of Commitment

The title comes from a presentation made by one of our ABC-USA pastors, Dr. Joseph De Roulhac, Jr. He presented in April at our National Leadership Council meeting. He talked about the three ways we understand commitment in our cultural; codes, contracts and covenants. Codes are the rules we follow, the principles by which we live and survive with one another. Contracts are agreements we make with clear expectations and restrictions. Covenants we honor, they are pledges we make that require loyalty, respect and relationship. Covenants establish and promote trust and stability and moral order in the midst of chaos. The Bible is full of covenants, between God and people, nations and people and between people. God has made promises to His people base on His grace and mercy allowing us to enjoy the benefits of being His people.

As churches together we also live within the context of a covenant. We do not have contracts between our churches and each other or the region. We operate on covenant. We work together for the good of the Kingdom of God not because we are required to by some code or contract but because we recognize when we work together we can accomplish much more than we could a part.

I am so thankful for covenants. Marriage is a man and woman entering into a covenant together. They promised to love and be faithful for as long as they are alive. There are good times and bad times, times they grow away from one another and times they grow close. The covenant is not based on performance but respect, love and grace. When one is not able to give all they should, the other, out of deep love and adoration is able to fill in the gap. My prayer for our region is that all fifty five of the churches we include as our family will participate authentically with us as we seek to be the body of Christ. Together we will pray and share, give and receive, work and play for the very glory of God. We will rise up to support one another when there is need and come along side when there is weeping. When there is celebration we will together raise our hands in praise to a God who provides far beyond what we can ever hope for or dream. Join us wherever God calls you to live up to the covenant that great cloud of witnesses who preceded us have agreed upon.

For His glory, praise and honor!!!



From the Associate Executive Minister — Greg Mamula

Shaped by the Story

I have recently had the challenge and joy of starting a blog. It is called "Shaped by the Story" because we are all shaped by the stories in our lives and as Christians we seek to be shaped by God's story. The fun part of our Christian journey is when God's story and our story begin to look similar. The themes that God uses to shape the world begin to shape our lives. Things like love of God, love of neighbor become foundational rather than ideals to be sought after. Living into moments of healing and restoration begin to define us rather than living into chaos and pain. As the Living Word becomes more central to our every thought and action we become more able to see the ways the Word made Flesh continues to dwell among us. So we are "Shaped by the Story."

The blog itself serves to be a place to engage in Christian conversation as seen through the eyes of young adults and those who minister to and alongside them in America. Many in our American church culture have bemoaned the lack of young adults in our churches and in places of Christian leadership. Hopefully this blog helps to demonstrate there are a great many young adults who are thinking deeply about matters of faith, theology, the Church, and genuine Christian discipleship. Shaped by the Story will serve as a place for me to process my faith and hopefully interact with readers who are doing the same. But more than that I hope it reveals the larger Christian conversation going on among American young adults.

So if you have a moment go to <http://shapedbythestory.blogspot.com/> and read for yourself some postings and web links to other articles, videos, and images that are stirring deep Christian conversation among some of our brightest and most faithful young adults.

JULY 24-28, 2012, WASHINGTON, D. C

Support the youth from Nebraska who have the opportunity to join other youth from across the nation for a week-long gathering that is: SPIRITUAL . . . MISSIONAL . . . REFLECTIVE . . . CONNECTIVE . . . EXPERIENTIAL . . . AND FUN Immerse will feature hands-on mission opportunities, daily small groups, creative and powerful worship experiences, exciting recreation time, and the opportunity to meet youth from across the country.

Spots are still available to ride on the bus taking our ABC NE students to and from Immerse. The cost is \$370 per student to ride the bus. Contact the Region Office as soon as possible if you would like a ride to Immerse.



Very Special Annual Events

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

June 1-3 — Moses Merrill This conference renews spirit, body and mind. Women from ABC/NE churches and their friends gather for an enriching & fun weekend.

MEN'S CONFERENCE

August 10-11 — Moses Merrill This is a special time of inspiration and fellowship for men of ABC/NE churches.

ABC/NE Region Convention Sept 21-23 North Platte

The annual gathering of Nebraska Baptists is a not-to-miss experience. Great music, speakers, fellowship.



Moses Merrill News

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Cracking the Code: Treasures from the Parables of Jesus, God Loves You!

Students are counting down the number of days left this school year. Have you begun planning to register campers for Camp Merrill summer camps? Camp offers our children and youth significant opportunities for connecting with God in new ways.

Campers:

- \*discover and play in God's Creation
\*worship and study the Bible
\*live with others in Christian community
\*make life-long friendships

YOU can help children and youth attend Camp Merrill this summer:

\*Check to make sure your church has an adequate supply of summer camp brochures. If the church needs some, give us a call and we'll send more.

- \*Encourage children and youth to register for summer camps
\*Contribute to the scholarship fund at your church
\*Invite your own children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to attend camp.
\*Invite your neighbors to send their children to camp
\*Offer to help a child or youth attend camp—give that youth a full or partial scholarship

scholarship

It's not too late to schedule a Camp Sunday and invite Director MaryBeth Robertson to make a camp presentation. Ministry with children and youth is critical to their faith formation. Invest in God's Kingdom by encouraging attendance at Camp Merrill this summer!

Volunteers Needed

A frequent question asked of Moses Merrill staff is "How's preparation for summer camps?" You can be part of the answer. Several opportunities are available for you to assist.

\*A zip line is under construction with completion scheduled for June 24, Senior High Camp.

\*The usual spring work is underway: swimming pool, cabins, roads, etc., etc.

\*May 20-26 is Work/Project Week. Sign up to come one or a few days or for the entire week.

A link on the Moses Merrill website, [www.campmerrill.com](http://www.campmerrill.com), shows the schedule for work on the zip line. It also lists the types of volunteer work needed this spring. SO, call and schedule a time you and a crew of your friends can assist. With your help, we'll be ready for summer activities, beginning with our annual picnic on Memorial Day.



Camp Cat: I've heard this rumor that cats rule. It's true, of course, but once in a while even I enjoy some social time. When camp welcomed a couple of other cats, I wasn't too happy about sharing space, but now I think maybe they're ok. I also hear about how campers make new friends each summer when they come to Camp Merrill. Some think camp is so important they bring their friends with them! I'll be watching campers this summer. Maybe making new friends, and having friends, is a good thing....

## Thailand Water Project 2012 – Huay Mak Nong



Back Row L to R: Ken Patrick, Mark Sawyer, Connie Francis, Tom Gillming, Bob Brown  
Front Row L to R: Jeff Westerfield, Trish Westerfield, Becky Mann, Angie Gillming,  
Mikel Nisse,

On February 1, 2012 nine Nebraskans left Omaha for Thailand. The Team consisted of Tom and Angie Gillming, and Connie Francis from First Baptist, Kearney, Jeff and Trish Westerfield from Benson Baptist, Ken and Linda Patrick from New Life Baptist in Bellevue and Isaac and Mary Kuck from Bertrand. We were excited and a little nervous about what we would encounter.

After flying for what seemed like forever, we were in Seoul, Korea and we finally got to meet the rest of our crew. They were a group of three men from Washington State named Mark Sawyer, Bob Brown and Mikel Nisse. We got to Bangkok at 10:00 pm on Feb. 2nd and went to find our ride to the Thongta Resort. A warm shower and bed were welcome! Next morning back to the airport and off to Chiang Mai. We were so glad to finally see Becky Mann's smiling face at the airport. Then load mountains of luggage and off to the Downtown Inn. This was our home in the city. We settled in then off to lunch and orientation at Integrated Tribal Development Program (ITDP) run by ABC-USA missionaries Mike and Becky Mann. It was fun to meet the staff and see how the coffee is ground and distributed. We also learned in more detail what we would be doing. Then it was back to the Inn to rest, repack, shop etc. and dinner at the Night Bazaar.

Saturday morning bright and early the trucks came to pick us up. We had left our passports, most of our money and some of our possessions locked in the Downtown Inn. The rest we loaded in the trucks and we were off on our adventure. We drove until lunchtime and stopped in the last big town before we left the Highway. Lunch and purchasing boots was our agenda. Then back in the trucks. At one place along the way we stopped and picked up our cook and one other worker. When we left the main high-

way, it was a very narrow paved road that wound up, down and around through thick trees and some villages. Then the last 30 km was a very narrow dirt road that really wound around, up, and down, and OH MY WE ARE CLOSE TO THE EDGE!!!! It was a 5 – 6 hour drive total. Finally we came around a curve and in the road were the villagers! We unloaded and decided who would stay where.

Connie and I were assigned to the shaman's house. We were a little nervous at first but they turned out to be fantastic hosts. Tom and Bob were in the hut just up the hill from ours. Mikel and Mark went way up past Tom and Bob's hut. The married couples were not allowed to sleep together in a hut owned by another man so a compromise was made and they all stayed at the Chief's hut but boys in one room and girls in another room. Mike Mann stayed in the hut just down the hill past our hut and most of his team stayed in the hut above the kitchen and at our picnic site.

Sunday, we spent some time in worship, resting, and getting to know the people better. We were anxious to get started and some thought this was a waste of time. But we would work hard soon enough!

Monday morning we began by climbing up to the site where the water tank would be built. Some carried



bundles of pipe and climbed on up to the water source. It was cool watching the pipe go up the mountain through the trees. That group would lay the pipe and glue it together. One group went to work on latrines. The last group worked on the floor of the tank. We had to level the dirt, tie the rebar, then lift it up and support it with big rocks. Once the up and down rebar was tied to the floor rebar, we were ready to pour the floor. So many buckets of rock, so many buckets of sand, so many bags of cement mix, and so many buckets of water, all by bucket brigade to the concrete pits, then let it sit a few minutes, then mix by hoes and shovels. Then bucket brigade again from the pit to the forms, section by section until the floor was laid.



This was hot and sweaty work but really rewarding! That afternoon we started VBS with the children. What fun!

Tuesday at 6:00 am the climb up again, we will lay the first ring on the tank. I was sick so I stayed behind. I was frustrated because I was having trouble climbing the slopes and now my stomach was hurting. After breakfast, as I was stuck in camp, I started playing cards with the kids. We worked on numbers and letters in English, then the days of the week. I got out the jigsaw puzzle and we tried to put it together and Melanie came down to try it too. I really was impressed with her, maybe she should be the teacher. After lunch they poured the 2nd ring and I worked on getting ready for the David and Goliath story for VBS.

Progress continued on the tank, two rings poured



each day. Then there would be the construction of the filtration tank with the same procedure but poured all at once. We finished the two latrines we had to help with as the villagers would build the rest. They got all the pipe laid and trenched in.

VBS was a wonderful success as we heard the

children singing all over the village, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah, San Sern Prachow (Praise Ye the Lord)! They had never been around Christians before so we are praying that seeds were planted.

When the tank was finished we all went up to take pictures. As we were in various group pictures you could hear the life saving fresh water pouring into the tank and my heart swelled as I knew things would be so much better now. What an awesome experience this has been!

When we got back to the city we went to the office for debriefing. Mike asked if we would be interested in adopting this area. There is a government school building in this village that is not being used regularly. He is checking into taking it over, if the government will pay the salary of the teacher and we will hire her. There



are two more villages nearby waiting for water projects. Those would need to be finished and economic development would need to begin. Then we would begin the school, either taking over that one or building a new one. We are prayerfully considering this and ask that others would join us in prayer and support of this important mission work. For information contact Angie Gillming at FBC Kearney 308-234-2311.

Also, this year the missionaries all have to meet 100% of their personal support. Mike and Becky Mann will be on furlough in the USA until they meet this goal starting this summer. If you would like to help support the Mann's, please go to <http://www.internationalministries.org/> and go to people, choose Mike or Becky Mann and give.

Thank you,

Angie Gillming

