

# the ESSENGER

American Baptist Churches of Nebraska



September 2006

**ABC/NE Date Data**

FAMILY REUNION Sept 15-17  
Lincoln Holiday Inn

Fall Women's Retreat  
Sept 29 - Oct 1  
Camp Moses Merrill

Adult Ministries Conference  
Oct 2-5 Camp Merrill

GOOD SOIL KICK-OFF  
Alliance Oct 21  
Grand Island Oct 28

Pastors' Seminar Oct 23-25  
"Financial Management"

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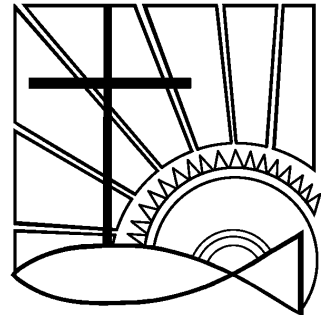


Incorporated as  
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## It's time for the FAMILY REUNION

**SEPTEMBER 15-17  
LINCOLN, NE**



**MAGNIFY!**

Everyone is invited to the FAMILY REUNION, the annual convention of Nebraska Baptists. The Reunion will be held at the downtown Holiday Inn in Lincoln, Sept. 15-17. Registration forms are available in local churches or from the ABC/NE office 1-877-244-7339.

The theme of the Reunion is "MAGNIFY!" The theme scripture is Psalm 34:3. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" ABC/NE President Beryl Hornberger said: "The theme suggests that we praise God and we also help others to see God through us. We want to illuminate God in the way we live and we want to challenge others to do the same."

Local churches have additional information or call ABC/NE 1-877-244-7339.

### Great Opportunities at Fall Retreats and Conferences

**WOMEN'S RETREAT Sept 29-Oct 1**

The fall women's retreat at Camp Merrill will feature leadership by Susan Gillies, Edna Pincham of Youngstown, OH, and Dr. Cheryl Dudley of Church World Service. The event will be a true retreat with time for reflection and renewal. Call the region office for registration forms.

**ADULT MINISTRIES CONF. Oct 2-5**

The 25th Anniversary Adult Ministries Conference will be held at Camp Merrill Oct. 2-5. Featured speaker is Dr. Roger Fredrikson, retired pastor and ABC leader. Vicktoria Goff, national director of Volunteers In Mission will share stories of volunteer work in hurricane relief. Paul Kondy will lead the digging deeper sessions. Call the ABC/NE office for registration forms.

### LAYMAN OF THE YEAR



The American Baptist Men of Nebraska named Norvel Jacobs, Lincoln, Layman of the Year at their annual conference at Camp Merrill August 12.

Jacobs is an active ABC/NE layman who has given years of service in witness to his faith. He has been part of ABMen for

over 50 years. He and his wife are members of Second Baptist in Lincoln.

Jacobs has been a volunteer at Clinton elementary School for 20 years. He gives counsel and financial advice to those in need. He currently chairs the ABC/NE Foundation.

*From the Executive Minister . . . . . Susan Gillies*

**BEING AN “ENCOURAGER”**

I have written before in The Messenger about our call to be “encouragers” for each other. I have the greatest respect for people who become a “Barnabus.”

But I’ve been recently reminded how much work most of us still have to do. [A side benefit is that being intentional about encouraging others also improves our own quality of life.]

In our society we seem to have perfected the ability to negatively critique. We come out of a movie talking as though we were the reviewers for The New York Times. It’s easy to identify what someone is doing wrong (or, at least, what we in our wisdom believe they are doing wrong). We can dissect the pastor’s sermon. We can point out the problems with the youth. There is a time and place for addressing problems but our focus should be on intentional praise and encouragement.

We not only have a negative perspective on the thoughts and

**Encourage one another  
and build each other up.  
1 Thessalonians 5:11**

actions of others, it is also easy to begin to suspect motives. Our public life is full of examples. So is our church life: “The pastor didn’t visit me in the hospital, I knew he didn’t like me.” – when the truth is you didn’t tell him you were in the hospital, or another family was in crisis and he was there, or he had collapsed from exhaustion, or he simply made a mistake – without any evil intent.

We are amazingly tolerant of mistakes or omissions we make, but not those of others. We need to recommit ourselves to extending grace to each other. Inasmuch as we do it to the least of these, we do it to Christ.

I hope you’ll come to the Family Reunion (annual convention) in Lincoln, Sept. 15-17. And I hope that when you come, you’ll come with a commitment to encourage. It’s one of the very best parts of this event. Words of genuine appreciation and affirmation are a blessing. Ask God to use you as a means to bless others.



*From the Associate Executive Minister for Mission Development..... Steve Bils*

**Focus On Costa Rica**

One of the first American Baptist missionaries I had the privilege of meeting was Ruth Mooney. Ruth’s ministry is Christian education. In El Salvador she formed a team of Salvadoran leaders to write Sunday school materials that responded to the specific needs of the Baptist churches in this region. In Cuba she trained a curriculum team to write discipleship materials for the hundreds of new believers filling the churches.

Currently, Ruth lives in Costa Rica, where she works with Ediciones Lumbrera, a team that writes and publishes Bible study materials for the Federación de Asociaciones Bautistas de Costa Rica and churches throughout Latin America. The material emphasizes a participatory teaching style that seeks the transformation of the learners as well as dialogue and community within the group. Ruth has published a manual for writing Christian education materials using this emphasis titled “Manual para Crear Materiales de Education Cristiana” (Pandora Press, Canada).

We are thrilled to be a part of her ministry through our support of United Mission and the World Mission Offering.

In a recent newsletter, Ruth shared a letter that she recently received from a church leader:

*For many years I have been involved with the Christian Education program at First Baptist Church in Desamparados. I have worked as Sunday School Director and, on several occasions as a teacher, for the past 20 years. The Sunday school is a vital part of the ministry of our church, because in it, our members not only learn about the Word of God, but also have the opportunity to develop spiritually and to use the gifts*

*that God has given them.*

*Our objective in Sunday school is that the participants, through the development of the lessons:*

- improve their biblical knowledge*
- establish and develop friendships*
- reach their family and friends for Christ*
- prepare themselves to serve the Lord.*

*Ever since the Baptist Federation of Costa Rica, through Ediciones Lumbrera, began their publications, our church has used that teaching material with great satisfaction, because it adjusts very well to our objectives. We have used all the books published, and through the years we feel that the material has been a great help. Some of the advantages that we value in the material are the following:*

- It is excellent for small group work.*
- The participatory method that it promotes, permits the students to acquire abilities to speak in public and to develop confidence to express their opinions. This has been a great accomplishment in our church.*
- The material presents various options of activities for the teacher.*
- The material is easy to understand, which is a great help for the brothers and sisters who are teachers but don’t have a professional teaching background.*
- The themes that are developed are rooted in life. Through the biblical teaching the students are motivated to put into practice what they have learned.*

*We thank the Baptist Federation for the effort it has made to provide the churches with this valuable material.*

*Ninfa Cordero Rojas  
First Baptist Church in Desamparados  
San José, Costa Rica*



## Nola's Take Five . . . Ideas from Nola Oberhelman ABC/NE Christian Ed Consultant

Five books for Sunday School teachers to read:

*Food at the Time of the Bible* by Miriam Vamosh (Phalphot)  
*Home-Along America* by Mary Eberstadt (Sentinel)  
*Down by the Riverside* by Everett Goodwin (Judson)  
*Illustrated Guide to World Religions* by Dean Halverson (Bethany)  
*Remarkable Prayers of the Bible* by Jim George (Harvest House)



Rev. K. D. Tu Lum, General Secretary of the Myanmar Baptist Convention visited with Pastor Joan Stewart of Parkside, Omaha, and Rev Gam Lahpai of First Kachin, Omaha before worship recently. Rev. Tu Lum was in the country for the World Mission Conference at the American Baptist Assembly Grounds in Green Lake and took the opportunity to minister to the Kachin gathered in Omaha.

## Powerful PrayerNet

You are invited to join American Baptist General Secretary and denominational Pastor, Dr. A. Roy Medley, in an on-going prayer opportunity. By joining PrayerNet, you covenant to pray with and for our American Baptist mission and Dr. Medley.



To find PrayerNet, go to [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org). Click on "Church Life" and then "Worship & Renewal" and then "PrayerNet." This page will have prayer requests and scripture that is updated once a week. If you wish to subscribe to PrayerNet, a "reminder" e-mail will be sent to you each week and you won't have to find it through the web site.

## ABC/NE TRIVIA

(Answers on page 8)

- Which two ABC/NE churches celebrated 125<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in August?  
a. Fremont & Valley, b. Albion & Ansley, c. Broken Bow & Mason City
- The Family Reunion this year will be in Lincoln. When was the first time the Nebraska Baptist State Convention met in Lincoln?  
a. 1832 b. 1871 c. 1939 d. 1952
- How many associations in the ABC of Nebraska?  
a. nine b. seven c. five d. three
- Where were Moses and Eliza Merrill serving as missionaries before they came to Nebraska? a. Alaska, b. Florida, c. Missouri, d. Michigan

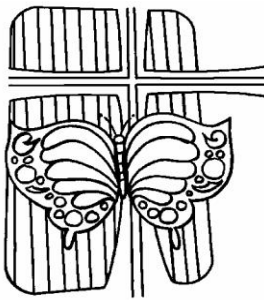
## Answers for Folks Not Sure About Coming to the Family Reunion:

If folks you know are hesitating to come to this year's ABC/NE Annual Convention — the Family Reunion — try these approaches:

- **"I've never been and I'm not sure I'd like it."** Tell them it's enjoyable, inspiring, and helpful. They'll get to know other good folks in the ABC/NE family, hear great speakers, learn interesting ways to strengthen their church, etc.
- **"I don't want to drive in Lincoln."** Tell them thousands of people have survived the experience. Access to the Holiday Inn is very easy. One of the bulletin inserts your church will put in bulletins soon has driving directions. You might also want to carpool.
- **"I live in Omaha and Lincoln seems too close to stay over but a long way to drive back and forth."** Tell them that if they can swing it financially, it's a good thing to stay over. It's less hassle and more fun.
- **"I can't stand long business meetings. Isn't that most of what you do?"** Tell them, "NO!" We have an excellent Board that takes care of routine business. The business at the Reunion is kept to a minimum.
- **"What's special about this year?"** Tell them it's special every year. This year the major speaker is Reid Trulson. He is very knowledgeable about ministry and mission in the Middle East — something we need to hear about. And he's really interesting! Other special features are on those bulletin inserts your church will be distributing.
- **"Hotel meals are too expensive."** Tell them that hotel meals do cost something. Our staff has negotiated the lowest prices possible. The total cost of the convention and meals is only \$2 more than last year.
- **"I'm concerned about the price of gas."** Tell them we are all feeling the pinch. This event has proven to be valuable and may well be worth setting as a priority. Again, carpooling is a great idea.
- **"I'm never sure whether I should stay for Sunday morning or return to my own church."** Tell them their decision is their own and it will be respected. This is a rare opportunity to join together in worship with our American Baptist family. It will be a wonderful service.
- Note: Let them know that they'll find a special welcome and that YOU look forward to seeing them there.

## September PRAYER:

### a part of the ABC/NE 2006 Prayer Emphasis



Join Baptists across Nebraska in prayer in September for:

- First Kachin, Omaha, Pastor Gam Lahpai.
- Greater St. John, Omaha, Pastor Thredrice Jones.
- King Solomon, Omaha, Pastors Al Wagstaff and Charlene Morris-Quarells.
- Miracle Hills, Omaha, Pastor Kevin Walden.
- Mt. Nebo, Omaha, Pastor Terry Arvie.
- Parkside, Omaha, Pastor Joan Stewart.

Pray that these churches will be:

- Blessed with energy and joy for fall programming.
- Renewed by the Spirit
- Re-committed to family ministry

Pray that these churches will discover:

- Fresh ideas for community ministry
- Undiscovered talents and gifts in the members.
- Deeper interpersonal connections with the congregation

## Spiritual Vitality in the Small Church



The theme for the annual Small Church Conference is "Spiritual Vitality in the Small Church." This year the conference is being held at Camp Moses Merrill, Nov. 6-8.

Anyone interested in the subject is invited to register and attend. Registration information will be available from the ABC/NE office after Sept. 6.

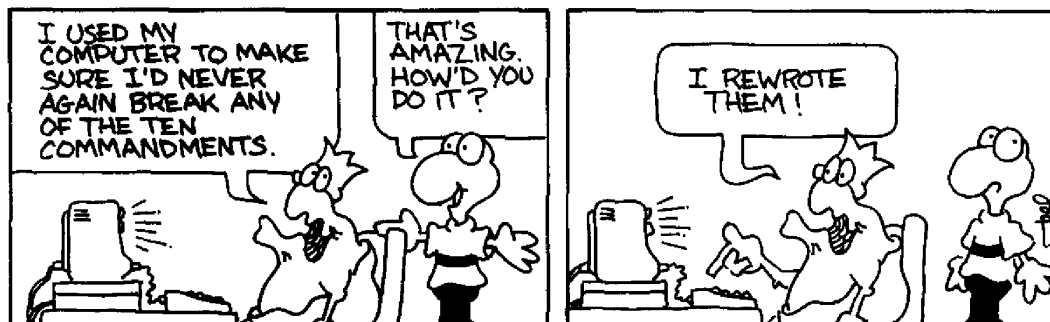
The speaker this year is Dr. Tony

Pappas. Currently Executive Minister in Massachusetts, Pappas is widely known for his writing and speaking on small church issues.

The Small Church Conference is often identified with Central Seminary since it was held on that campus for many years. This year Camp Moses Merrill invited the conference to the new Calvary Lodge and Ward Conference Center and conference organizers accepted.



## Pontius' Puddle



GREAT IDEA:

## Adopt-A-Grandparent

Adopt-A-Grandparent is an idea used by some churches, especially those with a large proportion of older members. When inviting folks to the church, the adopt-a-grandparent program is described. The church is willing to share grandparents with children and adults. Often people live far from their natural grandparents. The thought of someone who will share "grandparent-love" with them or their children can be very appealing.

Adopt-A-Grandparent can be very simple. The volunteer grandparents sit with the family at worship, invite them to church suppers, get to know them and introduce them to others. They demonstrate a special interest in the family or individual. Or it can be more involved and may include contact outside of the church building. [This program should not be seen as a way to get free babysitting services, etc.]

One testimony came from a woman in her 20s. "I was alone in a new community with a new job. When I visited this church, they asked if I'd like a grandparent. It sounded good to me. It turned out great! These folks took a very special interest in me, they were so open and caring."

Churches are encouraged to design the program to fit their situation.

## ABC/NE Board . . .

The ABC of Nebraska Board met August 19 in Grand Island. The Board welcomed new staff member MaryBeth Robertson. The Board also affirmed title changes for Dave Lundholm who was Area Minister and is now Associate Executive Minister for Professional Ministry and Steve Bills who was Minister of Mission Support and is now Associate Executive Minister for Mission Development.

The Evangelism Dept. reported that the ministry at the motorcycle rally in South Dakota was very, very busy and very, very successful.

The Professional Ministry Dept is clarifying the term PCL—Professional Church Leader so that it is clear that in addition to ordained clergy it also includes active and retired non-ordained, part-time, bi-vocational, and other professionals who are or have been employed by the local church or the region.

The Board discussed the various ways individuals and local churches support the ministry of the region. There was agreement that customized methods of giving to fit local church situations is appropriate and staff was encouraged to interpret this to the churches.

Other reports were given by the Mission Dept., Camp Dept., Finance Dept and the Ministers Council.



*From the Associate Executive Minister for Professional Ministry .....Dave Lundholm*

## Margin: Having enough left over to serve

I did a stupid thing recently. I overscheduled myself. I'm usually quite good about self-care but this time I really blew it. I scheduled myself for commitment after commitment over the course of over two weeks. When I went back to the calendar to look for time that I could take for rest there was only one day. I didn't leave myself any margin in case a major surprise came up in this time period.

It is easy for pastors especially to get caught up doing the right things, and doing good things, and end up being committed to doing too many things.

What if, instead of just committing to everything that comes our way, we planned ahead and considered the question "If a major funeral, or a family crisis, or a church fight, or a serious health problem happened this week, when would I have time to respond to it and do all the essential work as well?" And then schedule some time to be available to respond in case any of those situations came up. If nothing came up, this margin time could be used for rest, for family, or for other needful work.

Over a lifetime of ministry it's been my experience that the really hard stuff happens when I'm tired, over scheduled, and least able to respond. When our people are in the midst of the hard stuff it's also the time they need us most. By maintaining a healthy margin, let's make sure we have something to give.



## LOCAL CHURCH NEWS

by Darlene Rimpley

### October Deadlines

**September 11, 2006 - Print Copy**  
**September 15, 2006 - E-Mail**

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### E-Editor

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Subject: Messenger

**ALLIANCE FBC:** Joe Roten, Rebecca Morse, Trey McCoy and Pastor Rowe attended the Good Soil workshop here in Alliance on July 8. The church annual anniversary dinner was held following worship on July 16

**ARNOLD FBC:** Promotion Sunday was held on Aug 27, with everyone of every age in a Sunday school class receiving a small "prize" and recognition, and those entering third grade receiving a Bible. The Senior High Sunday School class planned and held a "Back to School Blowout" on Aug 26, with concerts by Evan Lee (Christian rapper and break dancer), Pilot for Kite, and Elevate.

**BEATRICE FBC:** Food Pantry Sundays were held on three Sundays in August. Sunday School Promotion was held Aug 27. Bibles were presented to six students going into the third grade and to new students who had enrolled in the past year.

**CHADRON FBC:** The church wishes to thank everyone for their prayers during the recent fires in our area. Ministry goes on! The church is filling shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child program.

**CHAPMAN FBC:** Stan and Nola Oberhelman spent a few days at the ABC Emergency Services Center at Deadwood, SD helping minister to the participants at the annual Bike week at Sturgis. Barbra Ruge, white cross chairman, is busy organizing the collection of supplies needed to send out in October. The search for a new pastor is on-going and in the meantime, Pastor Henderson is filling in as interim pastor.

**COLUMBUS FBC:** A Scrap Booking and Crafts time was held at the church on Aug 6. Sunday School Promotion and Teacher Appreciation was held on Aug 27. An ice cream social was also held on Aug 27.

**FAIRBURY FBC:** Matthea Haecker is the new youth minister at FBC. A "Back to School Bash" was held on Aug 27, beginning with brunch and followed by games and fellowship. The VBS mission project was "Kid-to-Kid", which sent "Jesus Loves Me" blankets and Spanish Bibles to children in Spanish speaking countries. "Mom Time", a weekly meeting for mothers, will begin in September. Ben Immink left for a four-month mission trip to Nepal on Aug 15.

**FREMONT FBC:** The 137th anniversary of FBC was on July 15. A Habitat for Humanity Sunday was held on July 30, with Dr. Greg Haskins sharing, and a dinner following, with all proceeds going to the Habitat fund. The annual all-church picnic was held on Aug 20 at Clemmons Park.

**GIBBON BC:** An All-Church birthday party and movie night was held on July 23, with cake and ice cream in honor the BC's 118th birthday.

**GRAND ISLAND FBC:** The White Cross Overland quota is being worked on. Thank yous are being received for the several cases of military Bibles FBC raised money for last year.

**JUNIATA CC:** The annual Church-in-the-Park was held on Aug 27, with "Echoes of Mercy" performing for them.

**LAVISTA JUDSON BC:** Several carloads of people drove to camp to be on hand for the Calvary Lodge Dedication. VBS was successful. The theme was "Treasure Cove." Women in the church sewed a number of book bags. The J.O.Y. Club was entertained by the Butterfly Singing

Seniors. In August the J.O.Y. Club will toured the new Freedom Center at the *Omaha-World Herald*. **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray as we go to the bank for a loan for our expansion. An all church Garage Sale was held in mid-August with the proceeds going for new church expansion. On Promotion Sunday the children put on a great musical - *Journey of Praise*. Pastor Glenn, his wife Debby, and two of their children made the trip to Sturgis, South Dakota, to minister to those in need at the annual motorcycle rally.

**MCCOOK FBC:** Sunday School Promotion was held on Aug 27, followed by a picnic, with the Board of CE providing the hot dogs and drink.

**NORFOLK FBC:** Ron and Rachel Johnson and family, who are with the Sammy Tippit Ministries, shared, following a catered dinner, on Iran and Afghanistan on Aug 14. Rally Day was held on Aug 27 with a "Wild West" theme, including a puppet show. This was followed by a picnic.

**OMAHA, MIRACLE HILLS BC:** In August the church started a new Praise Team to help in the leading of Worship. Robert DeRoy and Dawn Millikan have agreed to be Co-Leaders. The church held a benefit for the local Elementary School in an

effort to make a quality impact on about 2,000 parents and children in our local community. The church is embarking on a renewed emphasis on various pathways to disciple-making, in an effort to live out one of our core values, which is to make more and better disciples. Parenting Classes begin this fall using the curriculum, "Helping Children Mind - Without Losing Yours!"

**OMAHA SUNSET HILLS:** A "Commissioning of Youth Mission Trip" and a spaghetti fundraiser were held on Aug 6. A group of 18 youth and sponsors spent from Aug 9-11 at Bethel Center in Kansas City doing mission work, and enjoying a day at Worlds of Fun. Dorothy Hallback, who recently transferred her membership from Calvary, died at age 98. Promotion Day and the kickoff for the new Sunday school year was Aug 20. The Labor Day breakfast will be at the Garden Café in Rockbrook Village. Arlene Deerson returned from her summer duties at Green Lake.

**OXFORD FBC:** Curtis & Peggy Malzacher and Carl & Patty Shoemake became members of the church on June 18. On Sunday, July 9, 13 young people gave their testimonies and then were baptized during the worship service. We hosted a community Vacation Bible School from July 10-14. Approximately 65 children

were in attendance. The theme was "Jesus Is My Best Friend." Skits were used as part of their lessons.

**TECUMSEH FBC:** "Church Service at the Fair" was held on Aug 20, followed by brunch at the church.

**TEKAMAH FBC:** Homemade pies and ice cream were sold at the annual Tekamah Corn Fest on Aug 3. The ABWM held a "Shout to the Lord Night" on Aug 16. Camp Sunday was held Aug 20, with all campers saying thank to the church at a coffee, and then their sharing of camp experiences. Promotion Sunday was held on Aug 27.

Welcome New Members



**NEW MEMBERS:**

BEATRICE FBC: Joyce Wiest, Maurice and Shirley Graham

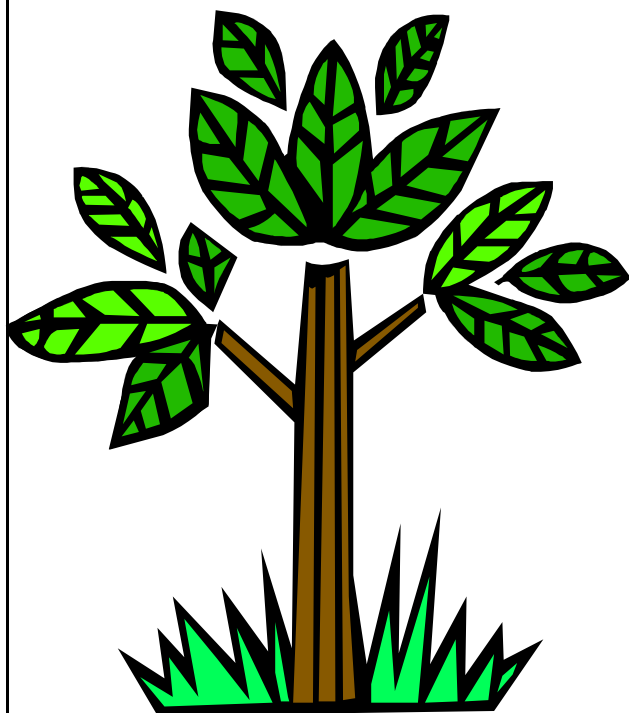
FAIRBURY FBC: Larry and Marcia Hill, Nicole Schlueter, Hershel and Janice Nuzum

CHADRON FBC: Nancy Lingelbach

OMAHA MIRACLE HILLS: Robert DeRoy

OXFORD FBC: Peggy Malzacher and Carl & Patty Shoemake

LAVISTA JUDSON: Diana Daniels, Lynn, Brittany and Mercedes Schwerman



## DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE FOR THE GOOD SOIL PROJECT

The Good Soil Project is an opportunity for churches to participate in a renewal process. Representatives of participating churches will gather three times a year for two years. Between gatherings, the reps will work with local church teams on "homework" that will lead to "renewal readiness."

There will be two clusters of Good Soil churches in Nebraska. One cluster will meet regularly in Alliance and the other in Grand Island.

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?** To qualify: churches must have an average Sunday attendance of fewer than 150, an annual income of less than \$250,000, and be located in a community of fewer than 50,000. Participating churches must be willing to have their representatives travel three times a year to Alliance or Grand Island for training.

**WHAT'S THE DEADLINE?** Churches must sign-up by the close of the Family Reunion. Members of churches that have signed up will have special "Good Soil" tags on their convention name tags. The first training dates are Oct 21 in Alliance and Oct 28 in Grand Island.

**HOW DO WE SIGN UP?** Call Dave Lundholm 308-389-4818. Or the region office 877-244-7339.

The Good Soil Project is funded jointly by a grant from National Ministries and ABC/NE..

*If You're Coming to the Family Reunion . . .*  
**Bring Collage Items**



There will be a Nature Collage on the wall of the Fullerton Room in the Ward Conference Center at Camp Merrill.

Martha Sorenson, Lincoln First, is the designer. She is asking that everyone bring something from their area to the Family Reunion in Lincoln. "Collect stuff that is dried from your area—grains, dried plants, bones, shells, seed pods, tree bark, etc. Be sure it's dried and free of live critters."

So, check the area around your home and church. Find seed pods or tree bark. It may not seem like much to you now but when Martha gets her hands on it, you will be amazed at the result.

Churches may want to enlist the Sunday School children in the collection of materials.

**FAMILY REUNION**

**GREAT OPPORTUNITIES: Training/Equipping Sessions:**

Talk-Back with Mission Speaker

How does a church identify & respond to Domestic Violence?

Ministry with Sudanese Baptists

Better than Caffeine — Energizing Sunday School

Welcoming Home Returning Military

What's a Mission Advocate?

Dealing with Change

The Good Soil Project

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Pastor to Pastors (E) .....	Dick Peterson
Youth Ministry Adjunct .....	Jason Workman

**Trivia Answers (Questions on page 3)**

1. C. Broken Bow and Mason City celebrated their 125th anniversaries in August.
2. B. Lincoln first hosted the Baptist convention in 1871.
3. A. ABC/NE has 9 associations.
4. D. The Merrills served in Michigan before coming to Nebraska.



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