



# HEARTLAND HAPPENINGS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK



## IN THIS ISSUE

**A DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH**  
*Mark Elliott*

**LIFE CHANGER MISSIONS**

**AMS SEARCH COMMITTEE &  
TRANSITION PROCESS**

## A DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH

MARK ELLIOTT

Recently, I completed my twenty-eighth year of service as an Associational Mission Strategist. During that time, God has given me the privilege of seeing healthy disciple-making churches in multiple contexts: church planting, church revitalization, international missions, and inner-city missions. He also gifted me with the ability to differentiate between cause and effect, or as some might state it, between doing the right things and getting the right results.

I've listened to the first two posts of a Christianity Today blog that is garnering a lot of attention. It is entitled "The Rise and Fall of Mars Hill." It's basically an autopsy on what happens when a church places its focus on getting the right results, while they ignore the reality that they are not doing things the right way. **Integrity, character, and relationships ARE important.** You cannot brush off collateral damage as simply a by-product of getting the right results.

All of us are accountable to God for how we steward our time and talents as we humbly acknowledge that any fruit that might be produced is because of Him (John 15:1-8).

Several years ago I began to write, refine my thoughts, preach, and teach regarding the principles I have observed in healthy disciple-making churches. I began with seven and after bouncing them off of one of the best global mission strategists in the world, Jim Slack who God has since called home, I have settled on the following eight:

1. Emphasizes Genuine Relationships
2. Focuses on Life Transformation rather than Simply a Transfer of Information
3. Willing to Hold One Another Accountable
4. Self-sacrificing for the Sake of the Gospel
5. Designed and Functioning with Multiplication in Mind
6. Organizationally Aligned From Top-to-Bottom
7. Always Intentional And Proactive
8. Implements Biblical Principles In A Culturally Relevant Manner

*Continued on Page 6*

# SUPPORT

EXISTS TO PROVIDE QUALITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING, TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE, RELEVANT RESOURCES, AND COOPERATIVE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT CHURCHES.



## LIFE CHANGER MISSIONS

CELEBRATING 2021 LCM CREW

A group of teenagers have been going the extra mile to help those in need in Siouxland. "Life Changers" is a faith-based organization put together by Heartland Community Baptist Church and co-sponsored by Heartland Church Network. Comprised of teenagers from different backgrounds from across the country, the group comes together with a single goal in mind. "Helping the community and sharing the love of Christ while we do that," said Annelise Clark, Casper, Wyoming.

The hot, sticky weather didn't stopping the group from fixing the roof of a home right here in Sioux City. Annelise Clark, a Life Changer who traveled from Casper, Wyoming to be a part of the project said, "It is such a blessing to help these people, they are so kind, and I am really honored to be able to be here. It is wonderful for me as well as a volunteer, it's an experience I wouldn't want to miss out on," said Clark.

Construction Coordinator Dave Guggenmos said the materials used for the project are purchased with the help of the city and other donations. The house they are currently working on was selected with the help of the city. "We are excited, it's really cool to get into the neighborhoods," said Guggenmos. Guggenmos said the teenagers aren't paid to get the job done. In fact, they paid \$250 each to be here. "The benefits they get are serving Jesus Christ and the joy they gain from that, so it's a win-win for them," said Guggenmos.

The group worked on two homes while they were in town. The youth groups came from Wisconsin, Nebraska, and Wyoming.\*



*This was the inaugural year for Life Changer Missions, and with two houses being fixed, over 40 student volunteers, and close to 75 support volunteers from Heartland Church, we feel it was a success and are already looking forward to seeing what happens next year!*



\*Source: <https://ktiv.com/2021/06/15/group-of-teenagers-help-fix-homes-for-people-in-need/>  
fbclid=IwAR2CN\_F2Y5J6FX2FTyPnq55uBQitUoUWyx3Wb3CYpbDyYNctGIWPh5TcLA

**JOIN US NEXT YEAR**  
**SIoux CITY, IA JUNE 12-18, 2022**

# SUPPORT

CONTINUED

## Potosi Southern Baptist Church updates DR Shower Trailer



For the past year HCN's original Disaster Relief Shower Trailer has been located in Potosi, MO undergoing major renovations. A HUGE "Thank you!!!" to Potosi Southern Baptist church, especially Larry and Phyllis Hochstatter for transporting the Heartland Church Network Disaster Relief trailer to Potosi for the work and then to Springfield so it could be picked up by the Nebraska Crew.

Larry took on the responsibility of getting this DR shower trailer prepared and updated for ministry and coordinated several men to help with the work!

Rick Psoey is the pastor at Potosi Baptist Church and former church planter in the Omaha area.



If you would like to be a part of the HCN Disaster Relief team, or need to update your training, please contact the Disaster Relief team at [HCNDR@heartlandchurchnetwork.org](mailto:HCNDR@heartlandchurchnetwork.org)

## 2021 Children's Camp: Carry the Torch

Over 30 children from five churches participated in Children's Camp this year. The small but mighty group learned how to carry the torch from Matthew 5:13.

Pastor Michael Lusk from FBC Bellevue spoke each evening, presenting the Gospel and teaching them about living out the Gospel. He led a Bible Study each day and walked the kids through the "S.O.A.P" method of Bible study giving them time each day to apply it to their lives.

- S - Scripture
- O - Observation
- A - Application
- P - Prayer

He also taught that they could use it during sermons on Sundays.

Katie and Lillahna Lusk did a wonderful job leading worship each day.

A big thank you to Sara Halmes for directing another successful year, particularly in a year full of challenges!



# CONNECT

EXISTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATIONS, CONNECT MINISTRY LEADERS BETWEEN CHURCHES, AND TO ASSIST CHURCHES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY CONNECT WITH THEIR COMMUNITY

## AMS SEARCH TEAM AND TRANSITION PROCESS

Step two: The Admin Work Group will recommend to the HCN Executive Board the name of those who will serve on the search committee upon Mark's announcement that it is time to start the transition process. Mark will continue to serve in his current role and to provide counsel as requested by the Admin Work Group and the search committee as it specifically relates to the transition process. In other words he will not guide nor direct the process, but respond and advise as needed.

The Search Team that was nominated by the Administrative Work Group and then accepted by the Executive Committee of Heartland Church Network are:

- Francisco Joaquin
- Ryan Johnston
- Emily Elliott
- Doris Lassiter
- Steve Holdaway
- John Mark Hansen
- Shane Lester



## HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Please join us in prayer for this team as they begin the search for the next Associational Mission Strategist for Heartland Church Network. Be in prayer for the Administrative Work Group as they work on a transition support package for Mark. Pray for Mark during this time of transition.

## PASTOR LUNCHESES CONTINUE IN AUGUST

One of the main reasons the Association exists is to help pastors have a place to connect and encourage one another. The Association takes care of the costs of these lunches - so pastors can spend time collaborating, encouraging, and learning from one another. Mark leads these times and usually has a leadership topic or information prepared for the group.

Tuesday, August 10  
10:00 AM  
**FBC Columbus**  
3210 30th Street,  
Columbus, NE 68601

## NORTHEAST

**LINCOLN**

Monday, August 16  
11:00 AM  
**Pizza Ranch**  
8420 Lexington Ave  
Lincoln, NE 68505

# LEARNING TO FIGHT FOR RELATIONSHIPS

MARK ELLIOTT, AMS

The number one thing I have been invited to do in my 28 years of service as an Associational Missionary Strategist has been to come into a church during a time of conflict. Because of that, early on I began to be proactive in helping pastors and church leaders understand conflict and develop Biblically based training to help all of us understand that relationships are a mess worth making and how to navigate difficult situations with greater grace. I developed a training piece I call "Rubbing Elbows without Causing Friction" and ask pastors to invite me to do it in a time of relative peace knowing that once major conflict develops it's too late. One of the major pieces I use is a "Conflict Style Assessment" piece created by Jim Van Yperen. When time for the full conflict conference isn't available, I have used Van Yperen's piece with church leadership teams and it can be done in a little over an hour and a half—as long as the participants have completed the assessment ahead of time.

On Monday evening July 26th, I had the privilege of doing the conflict piece with leaders from Sower and Restoration City Church in Lincoln. The event was initiated by Pastor Mike Whitney of Sower.



Some comments from a few of the participants:

*I just wanted to thank you for coming to speak to us. It was very insightful, and gave me many things to work on in being humble and gracious and gentle.*

- John, Sower Church

*I think it was an ideal training and tool to proactively pastor your church in soft skills that can become overlooked in the average skill set that leaders in churches need. It helped us know ourselves and our co leaders/other leaders in the church. Very helpful in my mind*

- Pastor Mike, Sower Church

*If you are interested in scheduling an event like this for your church's leaders, give Mark a call.*

**ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2021**

# PIVOT

**EQUIP ENGAGE ENCOURAGE**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 29**

**3:00 PM- 8:30 PM**



Keynote Speaker  
**LEO ENDEL**  
Executive Director at MWBC

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**  
"...for you have not passed this way before." Joshua 3:4

# A DISCIPLE-MAKING CHURCH CONTINUED

Before I expand on each of them in the following weeks, let me suggest that these principles are imbedded in The Great Commission:

*"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen"*  
*Matthew 28:18-20.*

Jesus' opening statement, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth," tells us that He is in charge and He is giving the orders. His concluding promise, "I am with you always" implies that we have access to that power; however, with great power comes great responsibility. God will hold us ACCOUNTABLE for the way we steward that power.

The primary command (main verb) is to "make disciples." This command requires us to communicate two critical realities: First is the fact that apart from Christ, people are separated from the love of God, stand eternally condemned in their sin, and are incapable of finding true joy and peace in this life. This reality should propel us in our willingness to be SELF-SACRIFICING. This also acknowledges that there is an initiating point for becoming a disciple: confession, repentance, and conversion that speak to the evangelistic nature of our self-sacrifice. Second, we understand that the Biblical concept of a disciple is not simply someone who is professing Christ, but a disciple is someone who is possessing a new and different way of life: TRANSFORMATION.

In addition to the one main verb, there are three descriptive participles in the passage. The first is having gone. Greek sentence structure and grammar raises this participle's impact parallel to the force of a main verb. This provides the English translations with its imperative "Go!" This means that laissez-faire, whatever happens, attitude on our part, is not acceptable. Rather it requires us to be constantly vigilant, seeking to identify where God is at work so that we can join Him. In other words, we must be INTENTIONAL and PROACTIVE.

The second participle is "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The modifying clause referring to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit speaks to the personal and relational nature of God and the reality that He created us as relational beings and acknowledges that ministry happens at the RELATIONAL level. Baptism has historically provided both a self-identification with the body of Christ and a specific affiliation with a local body of believers. Baptism becomes a symbolic relational connecting point to God and to fellow believers.

The third participle, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you," implies that our instructions are ALIGNED with Divine teachings and practices. And that alignment is not just knowledge-based. It is teaching with the intention of changing lives to "observe all that" Jesus had commanded.

His concluding promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age," means that the task will be multi-generational. Jesus' parting statement in Acts 1:8 was, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." This statement speaks to the geographical expansion that will be required to carry the Gospel to the world. When these two concepts are combined, a process that is constantly EXPANDING and MULTIPLYING is required.

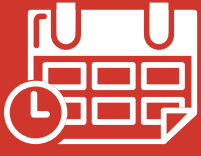
In the Biblical language (Greek), Jesus said our target audience is "panta ta eqnh" (panta ta ethne). Unfortunately, it is poorly translated into English as "all the nations." A better translation would be "all ethnic groups." Nations implies a geo-political state while the term "ethnic group" points to the language and cultural differences that exist in every nation. To reach every ethnic group, our disciple-making efforts must be CULTURALLY RELEVANT.

I will unpack each one in the weeks ahead. Meanwhile, I would encourage you to objectively review them based upon the whole of scripture and not just the Great Commission.

Yours in Christ,  
Mark Elliott

## MARK'S INSIGHTS

Please visit [www.heartlandchurchnetwork.org](http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.org) or call the office, 402-551-0608, to subscribe to Mark's weekly articles.



# LOOKING AHEAD

## ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: PIVOT

Join us on August 29 at 3:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. for an evening with Leo Endel, Executive Director of MWBC, as we discover *Where Do We Go From Here?* This annual leadership conference is designed to equip, engage, and encourage church ministry leaders including; volunteers, small group leaders, and staff. Breakout sessions include Strategic Planning for the Smaller Church with Dr. Leo Endel, Church Planting with Dr. Ryan Johnston, Cross-Cultural Missions with John Mark Hansen, and more!

Register online at [HeartlandChurchNetwork.org](https://HeartlandChurchNetwork.org)

## BIBLICAL COUNSELING CERTIFICATE

Earn a Biblical Counseling certificate this fall! Believing that God's Word is sufficient for dealing with the moral and spiritual issues of life, Westside Church and Heartland Church Network are co-sponsoring a training designed to equip ALL believers to minister Scripture to hurting people in a way that offers both encouraging hope and life-changing help.

This is a 5-session online course beginning August 20 and concluding on October 23! Find out more and register today online at <https://www.wchurch.tv/biblical-counseling!>

## NATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEER YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING

On September 18 we will join a nationwide event designed to equip your Youth Ministry volunteers. Youth volunteers play an essential role in the discipleship journey. The training will prepare your volunteers to help teens wrestle with theological tensions, discover their giftings and passions, motivate teenagers toward acts of service and so much more!

## THE HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING

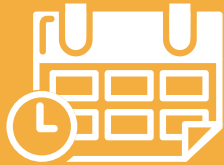
Save the date! Thursday, November 4 we will gather at Sower Church in Lincoln for the Heartland Church Network's Annual Meeting. We will celebrate all God has done for and through our association and our churches during this past year, as we look forward to what lies ahead!



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### August

- 10 Northeast Pastor Fellowship
- 15 Lincoln Pastor Fellowship
- 29 PIVOT Conference

### September

- 14 Northeast Pastor Fellowship
- 18 Volunteer Youth Ministry Training

### October

- 12 Northeast Pastor Fellowship

### November

- 4 HCN Annual Meeting @ Sower Church - Lincoln

### Mark Elliott, AMS

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### Rich Lechner, Properties Manager

### Ashley Meade, Financial Secretary

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