

Together

Worldwide Church of God News

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Mission Camp

Crossing Borders Camp in Texas, Mexico

By Lee Berger

The one-week Crossing Borders mission training camp in Mexico ended June 25, and I can surely say that the lives of none of the attendees will ever be the same. Our promotion for the camp said, "Crossing Borders is not designed to be comfortable; it is meant to be transformational." And it was surely life-changing on many fronts.

We had 15 pioneer participants, from six different states, as "missionaries-in-training" for this first year of camp. A few attendees had been on mission trips previously and knew they had a heart for mission work. But for most, this was their first experience with cross-border outreach.

One purpose of the camp was to help people "test the water" to see if cross-cultural mission work was a "fit" for their spiritual gifts, personality and timing in their spiritual journey. We figured if they attended camp for the week and got excited about doing future foreign missionary work, that's great. If they attended and learned



Crossing Borders missionaries and children at Casa Hogar Douglas children's home. Below, performing drama as part of an outdoor revival.

mission principles that helped them better reach into their at-home mission field, then camp was successful in exposing them to new venues and helping them in their discovery process to find their place in the Body of Christ.

In our training at base camp, we assessed our spiritual gifts, were trained in puppetry and drama, spent time in worship and chapel messages, had private devotionals and times of communal prayer, and participated in personal barrier-breaking discussions. We also handmade and gave away to the Mexican children over 500 "salvation step" bead bracelets and necklaces. There wasn't much time left for recreation, but we did manage to build an outdoor

volleyball court as a gift for the camp facility, and we played volleyball on it for about an hour in the dark one evening after we returned from a long day in Mexico.

On our field trips into Mexico, we visited three children's homes, helped with food distribution for the needy, assisted in clothing ministry, were a key part in an outdoor neighborhood revival service, visited a grassroots Bible college, distributed gospel tracts

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Crossing Borders

from page 1

and met several ministry leaders. While our hearts broke for the plight of many of the Mexican people, we were also greatly inspired by the raw love of God and the work of the Holy Spirit demonstrated in the rapidly-growing Christian church.

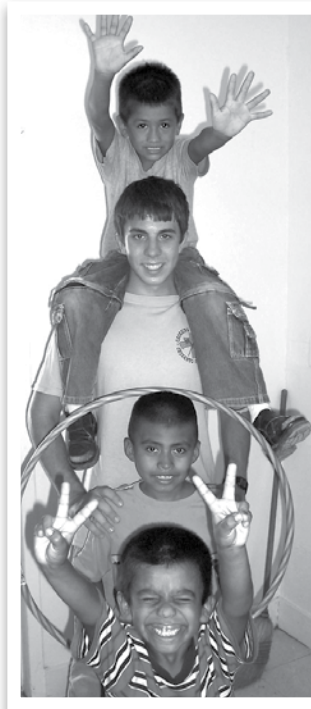
There's no way to describe in words the personal impact of what we saw, heard, smelled and touched during this camp experience. We walked through streets of tiny shack homes made from refuse lumber, cardboard, tin and tarps—with no running water, no electricity, no sewer. We held children in our arms—children of neglect, orphans, kids whose parents can't afford to feed and clothe them, so they end up in Christian group homes.

We participated in an open-air church service set up beside the public road, standing or sitting in the dirt in the sun with temperatures close to 100 degrees, closing our eyes often to keep out the blowing sand, watching the sun go down as the preacher spoke of his conversion to Christ after decades of personal sin and official corruption—and we watched people who own nothing in this life come forward to accept the priceless gift of new life in Christ.

In every experience, we were



Amateur carpenters building bunk bed frames. Above, Matthew Rakestraw with three new buddies.



overwhelmed with people truly hungry for spiritual truth listening to the gospel presentation with an intensity that is rare in our post-Christian, materialistic, multi-truth, me-centered American society. When the simplicity of Jesus is taught and demonstrated, the Spirit of God brings about miraculous changes.

We're already planning for next year's camp. Until then, we all have work to do as missionaries of the Great Commission to our home mission field

wherever God places us. 🌐

Corey Schuler, 19, was deeply affected by the children, saying, "I didn't know I could love someone before meeting them, until I met the children."

Cathlena Conrad testified, "If you think that a week is too short to change one's life, then think again. Mission work is a heart-breaking experience, but it is the best heart-breaking experience that anyone could go through."

Camp Chaplain Rodney Schuler said: "This was—and is—a life-changing experience. We saw firsthand third-world conditions, and to be welcomed at every level. We saw how God works miracles and we were part of the solution as God aroused in us a greater worldview to the needs out there."

Consuelo Orduno took some important lessons home: "This mission has opened a door for those God is calling to be missionaries abroad. But more importantly, it helped me see and understand on a deeper level the great need there is in our own communities, and that it doesn't take much to make a difference in the lives of others. Just use the gifts and talents God has given you right where you are."

Generations Ministries

Servants Passage: Join the Journey

New York

In mid July, 72 WCG members gathered for three days in the Catskill Mountains of New York for Join the Journey—the first of three “intensives” in our new Servants Passage program.

Servants Passage is coordinated and resourced by the WCG Generations Ministries as part of the Generations Development Program. Servants Passage uses mentoring strategies to equip workers and leaders to help them be more effective in making disciples in their home churches.

Join the Journey begins a two-year-long journey of exploration and learning. It focuses on exploring the way God has made each person, that person’s call to ministry, assessing existing levels of development, setting goals



Southern California

In early July, ten young adults, ages 19-25, met on a 7,000-foot-high mountain in Big Bear, CA, for our first Servants Passage Intensive. These ten are already serving in their local WCG congregations and were recommended by their pastors and subsidized financially by their churches. This intensive was organized and led by Dennis and Lorraine Pelley and Russell and Phyllis Duke and operated in coordination with SEP So. Cal., directed by Mark and Anne Stapleton.

Each morning Russell Duke, President of Ambassador College of Christian Ministry, led the students through sections of the Gospel of Luke emphasizing how Jesus trained his disciples as servant-leaders. Each afternoon the students served in SEP camp ministry as assistant



Left: Part of the Servants Passage group at worship in New York. Right: Young adult group in Big Bear, CA.

for growth, and planning for growth through learning communities formed in the local congregation.

Ted Johnston, Generations Ministries national director, describes Servants Passage as a “local-church-based ministry development program through which ministry teams grow together in character, ministry knowledge and ministry skill under the guidance of a local mentor.” According to Ted, these teams are equipped and coached by Generations Ministries leaders throughout Servants Passage.

In addition to the one just started in the Northeast, other Servants Passage programs have been launched in the Ohio Valley, Southern California (see next column), the Southeast and the upper Midwest. Others are in the planning stages, with one about to be launched in the Northwest.

It is the goal of Generations Ministries to have Servants Passage programs operating throughout the United States over the next couple of years. For information about bringing Servants Passage to your area, you may contact your pastor or district superintendent, or contact Ted Johnston at Ted.Johnston@wcg.org. 🌐

counselors and activity leaders. They spent evenings in group prayer, small group discussions, leading devotions and sharing testimonies. They discussed how to resolve challenges and conflicts in a number of hypothetical but realistic ministry scenarios. 🌐

“Everything was very edifying. I liked building God-centered friendships, working with the youth, and learning from experienced Christians.” —Audrey Lortz, 25

“I enjoyed the biblical teaching and the discussion of difficult camp and ministry situations.” —David Ramos, 21

“I rediscovered a closeness to God that I haven’t had for a very long time. I loved experiencing God in the lessons, the prayers, the solo time and the fellowship.” —Susie Day, 23

“I enjoyed the fellowship of devoted believers wanting to learn and grow together. I now realize my need for a mentor and plan to lead with passionate commitment.” —Cody Urban, 21

“I gained a better theological understanding of the book of Luke and learned wisdom in handling difficult situations.” —Sam Wegner, 19

“We were meant to live!”

By Mark and Anne Stapleton

In early July, 248 people came together for a one-week experience on a mountain in Big Bear Lake, CA.

SEP So. Cal. had 169 campers, 63 adult staff and 2 staff children, and the inaugural Servants Passage Intensive had 10 participants and 4 coordinators (see article on page 3). Around 25 other adults volunteered during the arrival and departure days on the parking, hosting and registration crews. There were also many people from Pastor Tom Ecker’s three church areas who committed to a 24-hour-a-day prayer chain during the entire week of camp (July 9-15).

also mentored two local youth praise bands who led the camp in worship on Monday evening and they coordinated a variety show on Thursday.

The junior camp enjoyed a water carnival at Cedar Lake and an afternoon at an area water slide park.

The highlight for the senior camp was the Purity Session on Wednesday. The boys and girls were separated for seven hours, followed by two hours together, taking part in experiences that reminded them that they are knights and daughters of the one and only true King. The youth were challenged to show love to one another by respecting each other in their thoughts and actions.

Pathways in Ohio

By Jim Valekis

At our fifth summer camp at Camp Cotubic in Bellefontaine, OH, there were 126 present, including 40 staff. Eight baptisms took place at the end of camp, and many (staff and pastors included) experienced a deeper commitment to Christ and deeper sensing of his “generating” presence in their lives.

Camp Executive Director Jay Richie created a well-planned, well-overseen structure that enabled the spiritual and social aspects of the camp to take place freely and without a lot of stress. Mike Greider served as camp chaplain again this year, with the assistance of George Hart.

A special highlight was a three-



Left: Guys use wooden swords to form a passageway for daughters of the King. Center: They respond to the guys’ apology. Right, part of the NewLife Fellowship worship team.

Through chapels, debriefing, solo time, activities, events, dorm living and other experiences, the campers learned how they were “meant to live.” (The phrase is taken from a recent Switchfoot song.) In the spirit of teaching the youth to give, this year a “Campus Improvement/Outreach” activity was added.

SEP So. Cal. provided a place where the youth could see that the way of Jesus is not only better than what the world has to offer, but it really works.

Randy and Marli Brown, a husband-and-wife worship team from Michigan, led the praise and worship services, which facilitated many moments of surrender, commitment and transformation. Randy and Marli

1 Timothy 4:12 was a key verse for the youth: “Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in your speech, in the way you live, in your love, your faith and your purity.”

Many young people made first-time commitments to Jesus and recommitments to living out their faith. Eight campers made public proclamations of their decisions by being baptized on the final morning of camp, while a number of others were baptized in their local church areas on the following Sunday. All glory be to God, who is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope! (Ephesians 3:20). 🌐

pastor Bible-based presentation (Mike Greider, George Hart, Jim Valekis) on the when, how, and who of future mate selection. After the presentation we sent the campers to the campfires with questions to consider and pastors to advise and help each group (organized by dorm, with gender-specific questions). As pas-



Step of faith: Blindfolded camper walks the bridge at SEP So. Cal.

SEP Rockies

By Cliff Snyder

tors, we got to experiment with team teaching, which we all saw had powerful potential both for camp ministry and ministry back home. And a lot of kids were given opportunities to share what they needed to share and articulate a positive plan of action for their future.

The last night of camp we experienced a powerful storm (lightning flashes and wind included) that not only took out the lights, but the camp's water system, including the camp's showers and toilets. It seemed that God was working with us even here, because we all experienced a taste of what happens if the "power source" isn't there, and what the application of a local "generator" or two can do in your corner of the darkness of this world. We ended the event with an awards banquet and a "camouflage" activity in the dark. It turned out to be a blessing rather than a setback.

The junior camp followed the Fiesta Vacation Bible School theme put out this year by Group Publishing. Chris and Judy Hoban headed it up, and they brought a team of staff workers from the Columbus church area, including a nurse, a drama teacher from a local high school, some musicians, and Grandpa (Judy's dad) John Halford as well. 🌎

With 52 campers and 38 staff sharing their week (July 2-8), at an elevation of over 9,000 feet located at the Wondervu Camp northwest of Denver, Colorado, SEP Rockies 2006 experienced its most Spirit-filled camp so far. The worship services were coordinated and directed by Katrina Weber. The chapel messages were equally well received by the campers, who eagerly bonded with our guest chaplain, Anthony Mullins.

One of the key features in camp this year was the well-trained and spiritually inspired staff. Sarah Miles has been diligently working on the staff training and staff bonding activities, and the fruit of her work was evident this year—29 campers accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Anthony did a fantastic job in relating to both campers and staff.

Our gift mix also included our fantastic kitchen staff headed up by Laura Griffin. They not only prepared us three wonderful meals a day, but they were also our prayer warriors for camp. They copied the photos of all the campers with their names, birth dates and where they were from,

and they would pray for the campers and staff as they prepared the meals. Along with the meals, the kitchen staff had themes for each day, such as Independence Day, Fiesta Day and Western Day, with decorations and costumes to match.

One of the most well-received activities at camp was the Adventure Class led by Joe Weber. The part of the class that really struck home for most of the boys was when each of them got to carry a full-sized replica of the cross, just like Jesus did before his crucifixion. 🌎



Teen camp in Louisiana

Our YES Teen Camp (Youth Extreme Summer Camp) was at a different facility, since Katrina destroyed the camp that we used for the past 15 years.

The boys' dorms were up on stilts overlooking a swamp. Three alligators graced us with their presence all camp long. Needless to say, we canceled canoeing.

I asked two of our young adults, ages 18 and 19, to each lead one of the chapels. They were able to present the gospel message

through the perspective of a teen. Raylon Joseph encouraged the teens to embrace the grace that can only come from God.

We held chapel twice a day. Even though this shortened the outside activities to five hours, many of our teens live in rough environments and appreciated the extra focus on the spiritual challenges they face.

We made chapel fun, relevant and deep, with high-paced worship and pre-planned and impromptu skits. *Anthony Rice*

Europe and the WCG

By Donat Picard



The world goes on, and Europe goes along. With its 25 nations, the European Union is discovering that political, economic and military unity can be a foggy dream. Because each nation has its own vision about the future, the EU is like a house being built without a plan, and without the help of an architect.

The European Union does not have a constitution yet, and Europe is still struggling to build its institutional unity in a fast globalizing world. Old continental enemies have to work together in spite of their tragic pasts, and they have to do so with a new generation that has no keen sense of history.

The EU is composed of dozens of ethnic cultures, languages, laws and creeds. Nationalistic traits of character

pean populations. Millions are “discovering” the world via Internet, and the computer and cell phone are the tools to stay informed, educated and connected. High-speed communication is bringing high-speed changes everywhere. The EU is no exception in that regard.

Christian biblical values are just another product on the shelves of the spiritual and philosophical European store. Internet brings some people to Christ, and Internet takes many people away from Christ. Confusion is often the end result. The final spiritual product is “self-religion.” The mood of the hour is for non-institutional religion.

If God (who has been the common European heritage) is more and more absent from “official” Europe, that does not mean that the Europeans are not spiritually hungry. If God is being intellectually and artificially negated by many people, many others believe

If God is more and more absent from “official” Europe, that does not mean that the Europeans are not spiritually hungry.

are always present to defend this or that model of lifestyle in a global society where ideas and fads move swiftly from one border to another. National old values are not always matching the broader and more universal vision that is developing among the European youth.

In this context, God is a name that seems to belong to the past. If Christianity was the cradle that rocked Europe for millennia, today God is not rocking the cradle anymore. It took a few hundreds years to shift from faith to reason, from poverty to abundance, from blind obedience to mental distancing from traditional religions.

New spiritual reflexes based on new values generate new behaviors that are being observed in the various Euro-

pean youth. If we talk about God with individuals wondering where this world is heading, we see that the divine is still a part of many people’s lives. The fact that many are departing from traditional religion does not mean that God is absent from their thinking.

If, in reaction to this prevalent anti-Christianity, a sort of “atheology” of postmodern times is developing in some circles, there are more and more Europeans trying to get true spiritual knowledge from the Sacred Scriptures. These Europeans are ready to listen to preachers who will bring them the original texts with a modern understanding. They are looking for “what Christ and his apostles said,” and only that. This trend may herald good news for those who have eyes to see. Europe

needs people to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The WCG in Europe

In that social context, the WCG’s members in Europe are trying to do their job of living and sharing the gospel in order to make a difference around them. Twelve full-time ministers serve more than 2,000 members. Many local congregations are being taken care of by very dedicated bivocational pastors and leaders. Members are faithful to their reputation in being generous, giving not only of their material resources but also of their time.

Links are being established with other Christian denominations as time and circumstances allow us opportunities for sharing our experience as a denomination. We realize that perfect unity among Christ’s disciples is still a goal to be achieved and prayed for.

The ministry and members have largely accepted the doctrinal changes, although in a few areas, the truth has been traveling at a slower speed. The congregations are maturing in their relationship with Christ and their neighbors, thanks to a sound theology that has transformed their hearts. Numerical growth is slow to come, but mission work does produce scattered fruit across the continent. Small groups seem to be “the thing” of the future, as is being illustrated by some recently planted house churches.

We have our weaknesses as a denomination, and Europe is no exception. One of these is our aging leadership. Another is the slow decline in income. A third one is our past culture, which sticks to some hearts and prevents some from moving out due to fear and inertia.

But these points are counterbalanced by positive elements, like dedicated youths, positive outreach attitude, mass media opportunities to preach the good news, and above all, a better understanding of the theology of grace producing faith and love. 🌍



What's happening?

Ordinations in June and July

Robert Bell, Vancouver, BC
Brent Crawford, Vancouver, BC
Bruce Edmunds, Vancouver, BC
Tom Kennebeck, Orr, MN
Craig Minke, Vancouver, BC
George Relic, Washington, PA

Women's Conference in Kalamazoo:

The Sisters in Fellowship of Kalamazoo, MI, hosted a women's conference open to the public. The speaker, Valerie Boggan, who pastors a church with her husband, spoke to the women on "the lies Satan tells" and how to control the emotions, to help us become women of God for the kingdom. Fun and fellowship continued with an overnight stay at the home of Catharine Sturdivant. Breakfast was followed with prayer before the women departed. *Catharine Sturdivant*



Community VBS in Big Sandy:

An average of 40 plus students a night experienced the excitement and variety offered by the five churches in Big Sandy, TX, hosting the Community Wide Vacation Bible Study, "Trading Places," during June 19-23. The participating churches included Gospel Lighthouse, First United Methodist, Solid Rock Christian Fellowship, First Christian, and New Beginnings Christian Fellowship (WCG). Each



church hosted one night during the week. A total of 57 children, representing 17 churches, attended at least part of the program.

Our congregation has been part of a movement bringing Christians together after we were isolated for many years. With five churches hosting one night each week, it was visibly a community-of-faith effort, not just one congregation's. We are looking forward to what God will do next. *Jerome Ellard*

Vacation Bible Camp in Clarksville:

The youth of Worldwide Grace Fellowship (Clarksville, TN) shared a fun-filled, Spirit-led, jam-packed Memorial weekend Vacation Bible Camp. They were divided into three groups of varying ages. Each group competed in team-building challenges while forging make-believe rivers, deserts and jungles. They crafted jewelry, decorated picture frames, played kickball, watched an outdoor movie, slathered whipped cream on their favorite adults—interspersed with lessons of God's love and his mission to the youth. *Sondra Peters*

Youth Discovery Weekend in Myrtle Beach:

Approximately 35 youths and 15 adults attended a discovery weekend in Myrtle Beach, SC, during the Martin Luther King Birthday weekend in January. There were worship services each day, a youth talent show, and a dance. The worship service on Sunday morning was on the beach. The weekend concluded with District Superintendent Keith Brittain conducting a Communion service. *Howard Blakeney*

Building dedicated in Rochester:

Sunday, May 7, was the dedication service for

the building we moved into in April. We now have the flexibility to come and go as we please and use the building on any day we choose to do ministry.

The Lord blessed us with generous people who were willing to sacrifice time, talent and treasure to make this happen. We are now in a better position to serve the community with handicapped accessibility, plenty of parking, and air conditioning. *Leonard Banks*

Church dedication in Washington, PA:

The Fountain of Life Church celebrated the purchase of their own church with a dedication service on June 18. Seventy people attended, which included many guests and former members. *Shirley Collins*

Events future: See www.wcg.org/events for more details.

Sept. 21-24: Celebration in Wisconsin Dells. July/August *Together*, p. 11.

Oct. 6-8, Cullman, AL: Fall women's retreat. Guest speaker, Ginny Rice; guest singer, Ann Hartmann. See the July/August *Together*, p. 11.

Oct. 6-14: Festivals in Malta, England, Scotland, Ireland, and British Columbia, Canada. See www.wcg.org.uk/festivals/ and www.wcg.ca for more information.

Oct. 20-22: Regional conference in Missouri.

Oct. 20-23: Celebration in Seaside, OR. Guest speaker: Bruce Marchiano.

Oct. 28-Nov. 4: Festival in France.

Nov. 10-12: Regional conference in Florida. 🌐



Left: A team-building exercise in Clarksville, TN. Above, prayer of dedication in Rochester, NY.



Graduations

Ryan Paul Jendrek graduated from Carl H. Kumpf Middle School, in Clark, NJ. He received the Faculty Award. **Tanya Ashlea Jendrek** graduated from Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark, NJ, on June 22. She ranked third in her class.

There were three high school graduates from the Community of Faith WCG congregation in Memphis, TN: **Katherine Nelson**, Kingsbury High, Memphis, **Derek Perry**, Craigmont High, Memphis, and **Ashley Todd**, Germantown High, Germantown.

Achievements

Wisconsin Dells Associate Pastor **John Torgerson** has been awarded third place in the "Edwin J. Omark Scholarship for Excellence in Preaching" contest at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, MN. John has been a leader in the Wisconsin Dells congregation for over 30 years and has served as Associate Pastor for eight years.

Weddings

Paul and Olga Jendrek of Clark, NJ, and Brian and Christine Templeman of Borehamwood, England, are happy to announce the wedding on June 3 of their children **Tamara Jendrek** and **Niall Andrew Templeman**.

Clinton Charles, Jr. and Margaret Joyce Turnell were married on April 12. They knew each other in high school 35 years ago and recently got reacquainted. They attend in Bluefield, WV.

Anniversaries

Bruce and Lila Blough, of the Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA congregations, celebrated their **65th** anniversary on June 14.

Fred and Beverly Davis, of Grand Island, NE, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on June 5. They have been members of the WCG for 45 years, and now pastor the Riverbend Christian Fellowship in Grand Island. They have five children and 11 grandchildren, with one more on the way.

Good Hope Community Church in Good Hope, AL, hosted a 60th wedding anniversary potluck and reception for **Curtis and Audrey Gay** of Moulton, AL. They have six living children and one deceased, and a number of grandchildren and great grandchildren. The Gays were baptized in 1952 and were charter members of the Birmingham congregation.

Cleophus and Catharine Sturdivant of Kalamazoo, MI, celebrated their 45th anniversary June 17. They have been members

since 1967. They have four children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Obituaries

Hazel Darkins, 97, died May 1 of cancer. She joined the WCG in 1958. She is survived by her children: Dorothy Gray, Ronald Darkins, Lois Thiessen and James Darkins. She attended the Eugene, OR, church.

Walter V. Dolengo, 60, died May 31, of leukemia. He was a member for 35 years and an elder serving in the Queens, NY, congregation for 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen, his brother Paul and a sister, Nina Proshel, and was preceded in death by his 95-year-old mother, who died on April 14.

Robert Duggins, 58, of Paramount, CA, died in his sleep June 26 from complications of diabetes. He was a member of the WCG for about 36 years. Robert is survived by his wife Constance, step-daughter Marisol Haughton, grandson Blakely, and two brothers.

Charles A. Jennings, 61, of Jefferson, GA, a member of Athens Christian Fellowship, died May 18 after a brief illness. He was a member for over 40 years.

Walter P. Ford passed away on April 23 in Scottsbluff, NE. Dr. Ford served as an elder and bivocational pastor until ill health forced his retirement. He is survived by one daughter and three sons.

R. Loren Frey, 53, of Independence, MO,

Birth Announcement

We'd like to let people know about your baby as soon as it arrives. Just fill out this coupon and send it to the address below. Please submit your announcements within six months. We do not print baby photos in *Together*, but we will put them on our website. See www.wcg.org/together for more details on events, announcements, obituaries, etc.

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Last Name		Father's first name	
Mother's first name		Mother's maiden name	
City/state		Baby's sex <input type="checkbox"/> Boy <input type="checkbox"/> Girl	
Baby's first and middle names		Date of birth Month: Day:	
Number of children you have* *Including newborn		Boys: Girls:	<input type="checkbox"/> Check box if first child

died June 29 in St. Louis. Loren was active in the Kansas City congregation as a worship leader and music director. He is survived by his wife, Mary (Baltzell) Frey; two sons, Jonathan and Nathan; a granddaughter; his parents, and many others.

Charles J. Peterson, 68, of Half Way, MO, formerly of Hopkins, MN, died June 28, of complications of Parkinson's. He was preceded in death by his son, his father, and one sister. He is survived by his wife Cary, his mother, two sisters, his daughter, and five grandchildren.

Florence Stauber, 91, of Medford, WI, died May 26. She is survived by her daughter, Karene Buehler, and three sisters.