

Christian Education Focus

by Conrad Showalter

In the annual Christian Education focus on Friday evening Chris Kiesling, Asbury Theological Seminary professor of Human Development and Christian Discipleship, addressed passing on the faith in the context of family and church. Chris and his family attend Oasis Community Church in Lexington, Kentucky, so spoke out of relationship to CMC.

Kiesling observed some of the changes in family life in the past fifty years by noting some of the changes in the game of *Life* © produced by the Milton Bradley Company. The 60s version used an automobile to travel through life, assuming a nuclear family with everyone getting married and buying a house. The new version uses a complicated series of twists and turns, multiple loops and choices—and an individual traveling solo, on a skateboard.

Using the Malachi reference to the hearts of fathers being turned to their children, Chris challenged the audience to consider the kinds of relationships needed to pass on a faith that is not only knowledge, but a way of living, a way of loving God and neighbor. He encouraged the strengthening of multi-generational relationships, the use of family stories, and the importance of mentors and shepherds outside the immediate family. Giving young people significant roles in congregational life will be important in strengthening connections to the church, as will the status and value placed on missions and service.

Chris noted the power of cultural liturgies that shape the desires of our hearts. The Christian family and church needs to more fully appropriate the power of our historical patterns and liturgies of baptism and communion. He closed with a metaphor of mirror fragments lighting dark places. Our lives, like the broken fragments, can shine God's light into the dark places around us. **BB**



Missions Day Offering

by Andrew Sharp,
RMM staff writer

The 2011 Missions Day Offering was a combination of giving by donors over the course of several months, money raised by the Ride for Missions, and the traditional offering taken during the Missions Day program. The congregation in the gymnasium that morning gave \$36,334.58. Donors to Ride for Missions contributed around \$90,000, and combined with other gifts, the offering total was \$236,736.58. (That figure is an estimate—plus or minus \$10,000—and more will come in to the offering in the coming months.) “We are so grateful for this,” board chairman Mel Shetler said. “I’m grateful for the \$36,000,” he said of the morning’s offering, “and I love the 58 cents,” as he pictured a child in the audience putting some change in the offering.

The Missions Day Offering goes toward RMM’s general fund and is a major part of the agency’s yearly funding.

This year’s cyclists in the Ride for Missions really earned their part of the offering. Several mentioned terms like “grueling” or “brutal” in their descriptions of the miles over the mountains between Columbus and Frostburg. From the start in Columbus at about 900 feet above sea level, the route climbed steadily, hitting about 2,400 feet at the Eastern Continental Divide and ending up at about 2,000 feet at Frostburg. The riders didn’t have to worry about getting bored with all that climbing, however, as the route spent a good amount of time plunging down and then back up again. One slope had an uphill grade of 10%!

New Workers Commissioned

Some are going to Thailand, some are going to Columbus, Ohio, United States, and some are scattering to other continents. They are a new wave of RMM workers, along with several who are returning to the field, and they were commissioned at the close of the Missions Day program. Pablo and Judi Kauffman will be returning to Granada, Spain. Esta Felder* will continue her theater ministry in the Middle East. New workers from Canton, Ohio, Joe and Lynn Troyer, with their son Brennan, will join RMM’s team in Thailand. Also going to Thailand is Danielle Opel, from Accident, Maryland. Dion and Naty Peachey, of Columbus, Ohio, are RMM’s new coordinators for the Latin American Missions Partnership, and will also serve as country representatives to Ecuador. Kevin Mayer of Rosedale, Ohio, is the new director of SEND Ministries. The 2011 SEND interns and REACH team members who were present were also commissioned, as the audience stretched out their hands and board member Mike Simpson led in prayer.

*Name changed for security