



An e-newsletter of the North American Baptist Conference Women's Ministry

January/February 2018



SHARE A CUP WITH JEAN... 'Enjoying Jesus' Theme Study for 2018

The Triennial theme 'Shaped' has prompted your Women's Ministry Leadership Team to consider 'how' we can be shaped in His image for mission. **We are shaped in His image by spending time with Him.** Our focus on Spiritual Formation for 2018 invites you to explore and practice the simple tools that help us experience His presence—spiritual disciplines (practices).



The IF: Gathering study *Enjoying Jesus* will be our guide to help you draw closer to Him.

The study is available on www.ifgathering.com. Click on 'Shope' to place an order for a copy. You may also get a free copy of the



study by clicking on the words 'Equip', then Lesson Menu. Scroll down to the study *Enjoying Jesus*. All lessons will be available for your use. A Leader's Guide is available for the study.

"Love the Lord your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

But the verse goes on: "And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

Not only are we called to a vertical relationship with God, but to a horizontal relationship with our neighbor. We practice spiritual disciplines to prepare us to love God and our neighbor in the everyday realities of life.

Enjoying Jesus 12 Experiences That Will Draw You Closer

Do you struggle most days with feeling distant from God? Busyness, numbness, and so many other things get inbetween us and experiencing nearness with Christ. The good news is that God has given us very simple tools that will help us experience His presence in the ordinary everyday moments of our lives. In our time, these moments are unpublished, quiet, and hidden from the view of our followers, family, and friends. These are the tried-and-true tools used by the Church for thousands of years to draw near to God and experience the full, abundant life He calls us to. It's when we choose these things that we experience Him, and when we do that, everything changes.

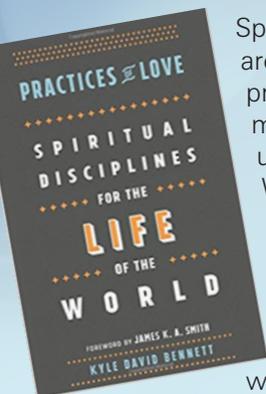
Enjoying Jesus can also be viewed by downloading the IF app on your phone or computer.

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To help us understand this horizontal relationship we point you to another resource: ***Practices of Love: Spiritual Disciplines for the Life of the World.***



Spiritual disciplines are often viewed primarily as a means to draw us closer to God. While these practices do deepen and enrich our “vertical” relationship with God, Kyle

David Bennett argues that they were originally designed to positively impact our “horizontal” relationships — with neighbors, strangers, enemies, friends, family, animals, and even the earth. Bennett explains that this “horizontal” dimension has often been overlooked or forgotten in contemporary discussions of the spiritual disciplines.

The book offers an alternative way of understanding the classic spiritual disciplines that makes them relevant, doable, and meaningful for everyday Christians. Bennett shows how the disciplines are remedial practices that correct the malformed ways we do everyday things, such as think, eat, talk, own, work, and rest. Through personal anecdotes, engagement with Scripture, and vivid cultural references, he invites us to practice the spiritual disciplines wholesale and shows how changing the way we do basic human activities can bring healing, renewal, and transformation to our day-to-day lives and the world around us.

— ‘Practices of Love’, back cover

Why study the *Enjoying Jesus – 12 Experiences That Will Draw You Closer*

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

~ Matthew 11:28-30, The Message

The twelve disciplines we will study are **prayer, confession, meditation, study, fasting, Sabbath, silence, solitude, simplicity, giving, service and worship.** These are not new fads or latest trends. They are time-honored, simple traditions that help us know God and enjoy Him.

“Spiritual disciplines are tools to help us put ourselves in a position to be more open and available to the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. After the first few weeks, you will see how the disciplines will offer a different approach to life. They offer a quieter, simpler way. When we are enjoying Jesus fully and living the abundant life He has called us to, we will be changed—and others won’t be able to help but notice.”

~ Enjoying Jesus, page 27

Request 1 free copy of **ENJOYING JESUS**

You must be a woman involved in women’s ministry in a North American Baptist Conference Church.

Email Heather Senges
hsenges@telus.net

Please include your address, phone number and church affiliation

Who is IF:GATHERING?

From the IF website
www.ifgathering.com

In 2007 Jennie Allen sensed God telling her to disciple a generation. Jennie knew that if this call was truly from God, then He would make it a reality. So for years she waited, took small steps of obedience, and watched God begin to open doors and give favor.

The vision was to gather, equip, and unleash women to live out God’s calling on their lives.

In 2013, 60 influencers from diverse backgrounds were invited to Austin, Texas to hear and speak into this vision that was beginning to take shape. As a result of the meetings, the first IF:Gathering event was scheduled in February, 2014.

Women around the world stood up as IF: local leaders, and took leadership in their own communities and hosted the streaming of IF:Gathering in their homes, churches, and theaters. It wasn’t just one age group, one race, or one denomination represented. Women tasted what it was like to be a part of a global move of God where each person had a place and lives were changed. In the first two years, the gatherings have reached more than a million women in 50 countries worldwide.

This year’s IF:Gathering is on February 9-10. Check the website for a location where a group of women is gathering to view the sessions in community or watch the live streaming in the privacy of your own home.

Enjoying Jesus is one of the many studies that have been developed by IF:Gathering. It is a sweet study for us to share and experience together.

Called to the Philippines

BY HOLLY NEWMAN
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH LODI, CALIFORNIA

The unwelcome thought was hovering at the edges of my mind the whole conference in February 2017. We women were being urged to consider expanding our vision of who God wanted us to minister to. I thought of the Bible study I lead, the woman I am discipling, and also, of the Philippines, a country I had never been to. The idea stayed in my mind and when we wrote names on small tiles at the end of the conference as a reminder to take home, I found myself writing: Philippines.

My husband had already taught several times at the Bicol Center for Christian Leadership (BCCL) in Legazpi, a city in southern Luzon Island. The center was begun by NAB missionaries, and has been headed up by national leader Mayette Ativo-Bueno since 2004. Steve's next trip was scheduled in September 2017, and I couldn't escape the sense that I needed to accompany him this time.

I didn't mention this to him right away, but he saw the tile on my desk. "The Philippines?" "Oh yes, that. I think I need to go with you," I reluctantly admitted. My husband was thrilled at having me come along, but since we had lived in SE Asia previously, I knew well the demands of the tropical climate and the long travel hours. I admitted it was not really my idea, but it did seem to be God's. Elisabeth Elliot has said that obedience to God is the greatest consolation, and this I am in tune with. I have learned there is no shame in not wanting to do difficult things, but when God makes his will clear

we have to trust he will enable and sustain us too. So plans were made.

If I went to the Philippines, I wanted to be helpful, not just an extra passenger. I began corresponding with Mayette about where I might be able to contribute as I am an RN and a private practice lactation consultant (IBCLC) in California. She had the idea to do health conferences around the area and began setting them up with her contacts. I would teach about infant feeding and hygiene to village women and health care workers. Mayette could see that these conferences as a service to the communities would strengthen bonds between BCCL and local churches where graduates were ministering.

My first conference was at a church building in Tabaco City, a small suburb of Legazpi that lies at the foot of the Mayon Volcano. It has been active for the last 400 years, but during our visit it was only smoking! The trip of about 20 miles took an hour and a half as roads are bad and full of bicycles, motorcycles and pedestrians. We arrived to people crowding into the open meeting area of the unfinished building. Mayette had brought a portable fan that worked on batteries, but it was already meltingly hot.

I had prepared three talks, and the original plan was to give them over the course of the day (or so I thought). Now Mayette said instead we would do the three one hour talks back to back with a few minutes break in between for questions. That way we wouldn't have to be in the heat so long, and we were more likely to keep our audience which was by now about 200. There were mostly women, but several men, a good many children, and a couple of dogs who made themselves comfortable at my feet. Clearly this was the most interesting thing happening in this village, so anyone passing by wandered in.

Happily, there was also a small group of health care workers on the front row, taking notes and encouraging me with smiles and nods.

The women were attentive and laughed at my jokes, so I felt



that they were tracking with me, always a concern when you are communicating cross-culturally. Mayette helped with translation. I taught on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding (no other added foods or liquids) for babies up to six months, especially when clean, quality food is difficult to obtain. I also went through some how-to's and best practices. I had researched breastfeeding attitudes and customs in the Philippines, so tried to mention things I knew they would relate to.

The questions they asked were interesting, and I was so happy they felt free to talk about what was on their minds. Some of the questions were:

"If a mother needs to breastfeed the baby at least a year, won't the milk turn sour by then?" (this one from a young father who had wandered in)

"If a mother breastfeeds the baby on the same day that she is doing the washing (by hand), won't the baby get a cold?"

"If a mother is sick, should she still breastfeed the baby?" (This is a common question I get in the US too.)

At the end of our few hours together, I asked the women what they learned. Here are the encouraging responses:

- Breastmilk keeps the baby from getting sick.
- Breastfeeding protects the mother from cancer.
- If I breastfeed, I will have more money to buy food for the rest of the family.

My second conference a few days later was in Sorsogon City, where BCCL has a satellite location. My husband taught there as well as in Legazpi. It was attended by about

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100 women plus the requisite children, dogs, and stray men. I was using a PowerPoint with many pictures of Filipino women breastfeeding to be sure women felt connected to what I said. When I saw all the men present, we asked the women if they felt comfortable. After all, I was going to be showing pictures of a few nearly bare breasted women and in addition we'd be talking about women's menstrual cycles. The women laughed and said it was fine, they were all married women!

My talks in both cities on hygiene went particularly well as I had found

articles and cartoon pictures of typical Filipina myths about women's health and reproduction. The women even filled me on a few more common beliefs! This topic also gave me the opportunity to remind the women of how wondrously they have been made by God (reading Psalm 139) and how proud they should be of their bodies' amazing capabilities. Culturally, women in the Philippines are still ashamed of their bodily functions and occupy a more traditional position relative to men as being much less important. I believe the women enjoyed the chance to talk freely about these matters with a health care professional and have many of their concerns put to rest.

In Sorsogon City most of the women were part of Compassion International, receiving benefits through sponsorship. I had brought dozens of small decorated Bible verse cards to be colored, along with colored pencils. Before and after the talks the women greatly enjoyed spending a few minutes coloring and having one each to take home.

My third and last conference was for health care workers, and I hoped for this one to bring lasting change since it is always most effective to teach the teachers. However the night before, the conference was cancelled due to an emergency meeting that was called by the government. We were all disappointed at this. I met with the woman who had organized the meeting and left her all my written materials and PowerPoints so that she could use them as the opportunity arose. Flexibility is one of the first requirements for successful missionary work.

Because of my trip I developed a true love for the Filipino people, who were endlessly kind, welcoming, and hungry for spiritual food. I believe the women were truly encouraged in feeding their babies the best way possible and taking care of their own amazing bodies.

Obedience to the Lord does not always bring pleasure and comfort, but instead something much better: the knowledge of a job well done just for His own dear sake.

Women's Luncheon

ALL LADIES WHO ATTEND THE TRIENNIAL 2018 ARE INVITED TO ATTEND A SPECIAL LUNCHEON AT THE WESTIN EDMONTON.

Friday, July 27, 2018 • 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm
Pre-registration required



Heather Hayashi

Luncheon speaker: Heather Hayashi
Guest potter: Debbie Mueller

Explore as women what it means to be "Clay in the Potter's Hands" as God molds and shapes lives for His special purpose. Enjoy connecting with friends, old and new.



Debbie Mueller

Hear how women throughout the NAB are letting the Potter mold and shape them to be on mission with God in their neighborhoods and communities. Hosted by the NAB Women's Ministry Leadership Team, this luncheon will provide inspiration for ways to connect with other NAB women.

Heather Hayashi is a reader, writer, lover of coffee and curious about many things. She and her husband Randy live in Edmonton, AB and have two young adult sons. She is a graduate from Taylor Seminary with a Master of Theological Studies Degree and received her training as a spiritual director from Urban Sanctuary. She is the author of *31 Days of Christmas*, *Pray Any Way* and is currently working on a third book. Heather lives with chronic illness and pain and has come to love God deeply through this experience. It is from this ongoing need to surrender her will to God that she is honoured to write and speak about His goodness and grace!

Debbie Mueller has a passion for a deep relationship with God and for walking alongside others with a similar heart. She has been a mentor and friend to women in Africa, Guatemala, Fiji and here in North America. In addition to being a wife and mother Debbie has been in leadership in Youth With A Mission and local churches in Canada and the United States. For the past 12 years she has worked as a ceramicist.

Register for the Triennial at nabconference.org Click on Triennial.
Early bird registration ends January 31, 2018