

Leaders

Ron & Joan Denlinger

Speakers, bloggers, authors; caretakers for their two special needs children and elderly live-in parents; former RHMA church planters; spent five years on the road ministering to RHMA church planters and pastors from their RV trailer “home”



Ellen Tuttle

Former small-town pastor’s wife; serves and speaks with her husband, Phil, President of Walk Thru the Bible



Collin Hansen

Vice President of Content and Editor in Chief, The Gospel Coalition; grew up in rural South Dakota; advisory board member, Beeson Divinity School; author, including *Gospelbound: Living with Resolute Hope in an Anxious Age*



Brian Wechsler

Executive Director Emeritus – after 20 years as Executive Director – of Village Missions; served for 17 years as a Village Missions pastor in Iowa and Colorado



Miriam Lofquist

Raised in Utah by church-planting parents; served with her husband, Les, in small-town church planting-ministry; conference speaker; works with future ministry wives at Shepherds Theological Seminary



Daniel Stegeman

Pastor, Pine Glen Alliance Church, Lewistown, Pennsylvania; grew up in Western Canada; has pastored churches in Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania; serves as an editor for The Gospel Coalition Canada



Seminars

Friday Morning

Collin Hansen

Making Sense of the Rural/Urban Divide

Tim Keller has observed that cities on opposite sides of the world have more in common with each other than with their own surrounding geographic regions. What does this mean for our ministry and mission? We will seek to understand differences between urban and rural, with a focus on how we can cooperate for the sake of Christ.

Miriam Lofquist (Women)

Your Soul and Your Smartphone

Smartphones are everywhere – almost all of us have one, and it goes everywhere we go. Each of us also has a soul that is eternal. We will examine what the Word of God says about the soul and what the dangers are to your soul when using your smartphone.

Phil Tuttle

Overcoming Depression – The Silent Killer of God’s Servants

Every year depression seems to claim more victims – especially among pastors and their spouses. In this seminar, we’ll dig deep into the life of one of God’s choicest leaders. Recognizing the familiar pattern of destructive choices could help you interrupt depression’s downward spiral. Even better, discovering the tangible ways God intervened to restore his hope in life and joy in ministry could do the same for you.

Brian Wechsler

Handling the Expectation Trap

It’s been my observation that false expectations about ourselves, our family, leadership, church, and even our Lord, can rob a small-church pastor of joy and even cause him to implode. How do we recognize false expectations and develop realistic ones? We’ll work together on discovering some ways to avoid the “expectation trap.”

Stephen Witmer

A Big Gospel in Small Places

We’re to take the gospel to places, but the gospel also takes us to places. The very nature and shape of the gospel we love sends some of us to small places and provides us motivation and

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direction for how to minister there. We'll consider what a gospel-shaped ministry in small places will look like.

Friday Afternoon

Collin Hansen

Faithful Endurances as a Small-Town Pastor

What qualities and practices help small-town pastors endure in faith? To be sure, there's much overlap with our urban and suburban counterparts. But the unique factors are instructive in this time of high-profile pastoral defections and moral failings. We'll look at biblical, historical, and contemporary examples for encouragement to stay the course and finish the race.

Les Lofquist

Gaining Respect in the Small-Town Church

Each pastor, no matter the size of his flock, must have the respect of his people in order to be an effective leader. How do you gain respect as the pastor of a town and country church? We'll discuss essential biblical considerations as well as sociological realities.

Miriam Lofquist (Women)

Speaking Truth to Yourself in a World of Lies

Today, more than ever it seems, there are some things said, printed, and quoted that just are not true. As believers, we need to be certain we are not repeating lies to ourselves but instead are speaking the truth of God's Word to ourselves. We'll talk about what this looks like and ways to improve our ability to speak truth to ourselves and others.

Phil Tuttle

Making this December Your Most Fruitful Christmas Season Yet

Every year about this time it hits us. We're thrilled Christmas is coming, but then we remember we have to find another way to share the old story in a new way. The pressure often robs us of our own Christmas joy. This seminar will expose you to a tool from Walk Thru the Bible that pastors all over the world are using to introduce all kinds of people to Jesus through the story of His mother, Mary.

Stephen Witmer

Effective Small-Place Ministry: Living Inside the Circle

Fruitful small-place ministry will recognize the massive advantages of living within the circle of a small town, particularly the overlap in relationships it creates. Come to this seminar to consider practical ways in which ministers and churches can enjoy and benefit from this overlap and see it as a golden gospel opportunity.

Saturday Morning

Ron and Joan Denlinger

Caring for Others When You Have Significant Needs Yourself

We will share our story of church planting in small towns while caring for our two disabled children. As we relate some of the challenges and pitfalls we encountered, and things we learned along the way, our hope is that you will be inspired to see how God might use your difficult circumstances to enhance – not hinder – your ministry to others.

Les Lofquist

Sharpening Your Tools

Workers know that tools need to be regularly sharpened – same with pastors. What are ways pastors can sharpen their weekly sermon preparations? We will review some key principles for how to prepare an effective sermon and deliver it – geared to the pressures of the small-church pastor. The goal is realistic instruction and encouraging motivation to inspire a small-church pastor, not fill him with guilt and despair.

Daniel Stegeman

Jonathan Edwards and the Small-Town Pastor

It is tempting to think that what is new and trendy is better than what is old and tested. This seminar will be a blast from the past as we look at Jonathan Edwards. You might view “America's greatest theologian” as an unlikely source of wisdom when it comes to small-town ministry. However, Edwards was a small-town pastor in frontier America and has much to teach the modern-day pastor. Ordination sermons that Edwards preached reveal three main tasks and outcomes that should occupy pastors today.

Ellen Tuttle (Women)

Protecting Your Family from Your Ministry

When God called you into ministry, He asked you to make many sacrifices. We'll explore practical ways to protect your family relationships from your role at church. We'll avoid clichés and quick fixes as we grapple with this lifelong challenge.

Brian Wechsler

Resilient Ministry

As a mission director of a rural church ministry for over 20 years and before that a missionary pastor, I've observed missionaries with staying power and others who give up too quickly. What are some keys to a resilient ministry, and what do you do when everything within you cries to quit? What are areas that you need to build into your ministry to enable you to “stay the course”?