

To embrace, encourage and empower through a network of Christian educators.

## Sower vs. Gardener: which kind of teacher are you?

### Becky Ramsey

Mark 4:3-8 tells the Parable of the Sower. Jesus was teaching that there are reasons why, when the Word of God is shared, it might not grow in equal proportions. But as I was looking at this passage from a teacher's prospective, God showed me a very different outlook on this passage. There are teachers who are content to be a sower. However, in the classroom, I believe God calls us to be gardeners, not just a person who sows some seed.

As the sower scattered his seed, "Some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up." (NIV) This sower was concerned with getting out the seed in the same way that some teachers are focused just on getting through the material--rather than noticing whether or not some students understand the information. A true gardener has a plan of attack. The gardener will organize the garden and decide where and when to plant each particular seed. Some seeds take longer to germinate; others need differing amounts of sunlight. Some seeds need more space to grow properly. The true teacher will take the time and effort to know the students and the conditions needed to give the lesson the best chance for germination. Sometimes, the hardest job is to keep the birds (circumstances) from snatching away the seed of information that is necessary for progress in the classroom.

The sower was not very careful when he scattered his seed and some seed "...fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil



was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched." Like this sower, some teachers do not notice the rocks or

the depths of the soil when they seek to sow knowledge. Their concern is to "teach," not to "communicate." A true gardener works the soil. If the ground is rocky, he cultivates.

If the soil is shallow, he hauls in good topsoil and fertilizer. In the lives of our students, we cannot always get rid of all the rocks, but we can manage to observe and dig out many that are on the surface. We can haul in good methods and come up with ways to entice even the most uninterested student.

My husband, who teaches middle school history and geography, takes to his class all kinds of objects that he has gathered from around the world on mission trips. He lets the students see and touch things that relate to the countries the class is studying. It is amazing even to see the parents who will stop by the classroom to see what is on the "observation table" for the week.

Sometimes the "fertilizer" can be something as small as congratulating a student on a

small accomplishment that most teachers would overlook. The highest compliment I ever received was when another teacher let me know what a student relayed about me: "She refused to let me fail." I hope I will always have that tenacity even when it would be much easier to complain that there were just too many rocks in the soil of a student's life.

A sower may not be concerned about the condition of the garden. Scripture says, "Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain." (NIV) A true gardener nurtures the soil. He pulls out the weeds and thorns. He is not satisfied just to till the ground before planting. Instead, the gardener continues to remove any weeds and thorns that might come back after the planting to hinder the plant from producing. While we may not be able to change the environment that a child experiences at home, we can make sure that the environment of our classroom will nurture growth. Our classrooms may be the very "grow light" that will help a child overcome an environment that chokes the life out of children.

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MEET  
the  
COUNCIL

## A message from the Chairman

### Dr. Jim Upchurch

Accept the Calling...

1 John 3:18 "Dear Children, Let us not love with words or tongue, but with action and in truth."

I have been honored to serve as the Chairman of the Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW) organization for the last four years. I have been joined with such gifted individuals who are serving in specific designated education strands and liaisons from Nazarene Compassionate Ministries and the International Board of Education. We stand ready to resource and encourage all Christian educators associated with the Church of the Nazarene and provide a network of partnerships that enrich the various ministries of all educators.

Nazarene Educators Worldwide is an official

organization of the Church of the Nazarene and is sponsored by Sunday School and Discipleship Ministries International. The expanded focus of NEW will be to continue to help Christian educators at all levels of teaching! Nazarene educators minister in the Public Schools, Private Schools, Christian Schools, Homeschools, Childcares/Preschools, Colleges/Universities, and International Schools. We had reports from 1,249 Christian Schools with a population of 95,108 children in 2012!

We as Christian educators have a vital role to play. The calling that God has placed in your heart is met with the day to day challenges that face all educators. I hope you sense the "oneness" that can only come from a collective group of educators praying for each other worldwide.

Each one of you brings a wealth of teaching experience and talents that I know are

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## Introducing Brad King

Prof Brad King coordinates the Physical Education program for the Health and Exercise Science Department at MidAmerica Nazarene University in Olathe, Kansas.

King arrived at MidAmerica Nazarene University in 1995 from Goddard, Kansas where he served as an assistant principal for one year. Prior to that he spent fourteen years in Valley Center, Kansas as a teacher, coach, athletic director, and assistant principal.

Professor King began his work at MNU in the Teacher Education Department and served as Licensing Officer, Field Placement Coordinator, and professor. He served as Interim-Chair for the Department of Education for three years. During that time, the department received their first national accreditation through NCATE. King then served as Interim Chair

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## WANT TO GET PUBLISHED IN THE NEW? WRITE TO US!

Has God placed something on your heart to say? Would you like to voice your opinion on an issue? Do you have questions that need to be answered? Put your thoughts into words and send them to the editor at [mksauer13@gmail.com](mailto:mksauer13@gmail.com). We will choose the best articles and publish them in our newsletter! We can't wait to hear from you!

# TAKE A *Vacation*

## Jan Wilton

What? Take a vacation from Preschool/Daycare? Anyone who has ever been a director or teacher in a daycare understands and questions this remark. The lack of vacation creates burnout for many directors and employees.

In the first center I directed, I observed over-tired, stressed teachers who were burned out from the same routine for years. It is difficult to take time off from work in an industry that typically does not pay for time off. We also discovered that parents do not welcome a "closed for vacation" notice on the door of their childcare center. What is a director to do?

After facing this dilemma, I found a creative way to "give a vacation break" to my staff. I gave each teacher and assistant the option of working during the summer, all or part of it. This was a risk, but one that is worth taking. Enrollment is usually lower during summer months, and the summer staff were individuals who wanted to be there. Staff who desired the summer off were not penalized or berated. It was a choice. At times, it was necessary to hire summer staff. Some of the new summer staff were college students who were home for the summer. Some were teachers from school-year only preschools who needed work for the summer. This brought new and fresh ideas into the center.

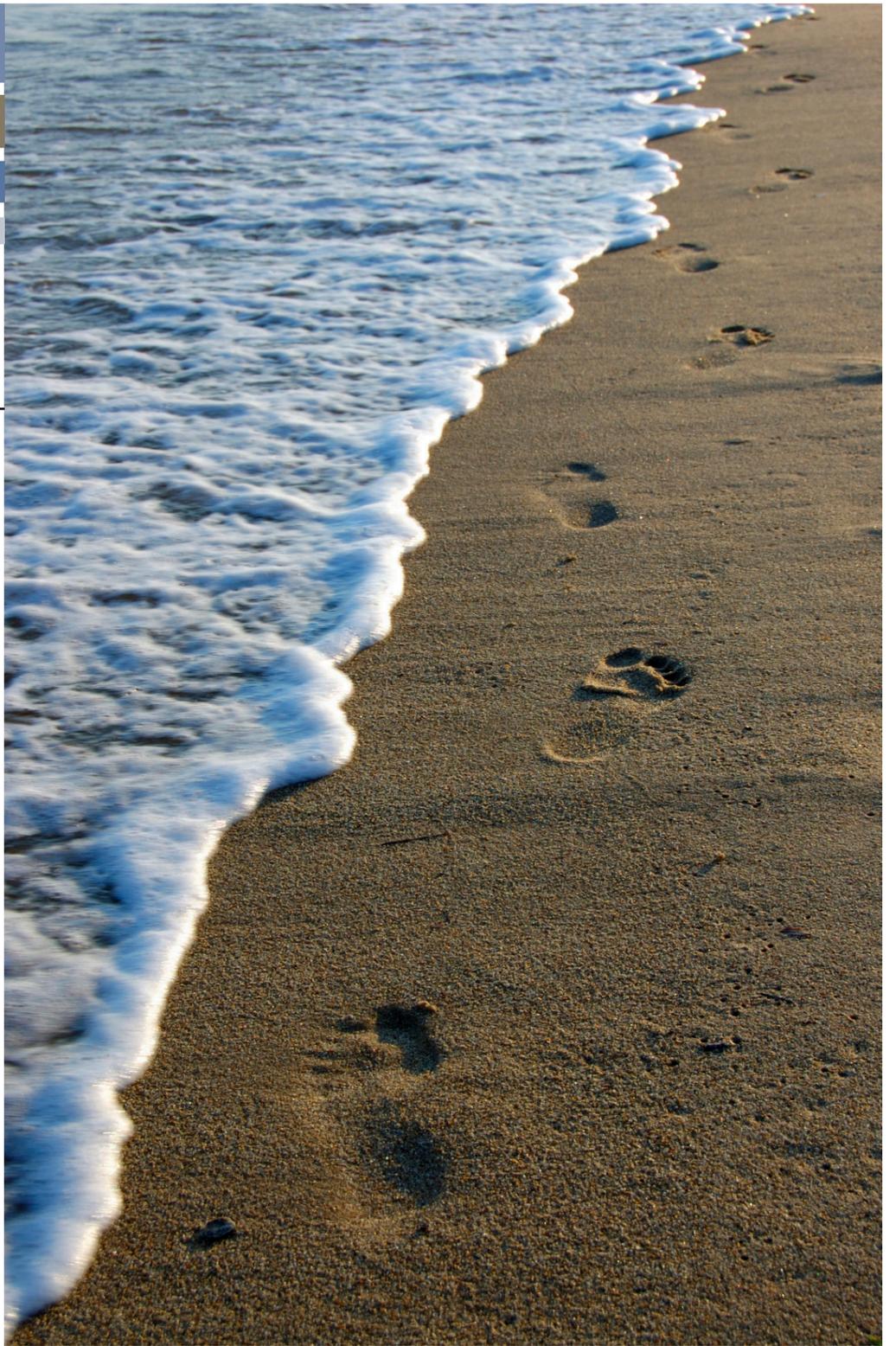
Each teacher, both those from the center and new summer staff, were asked to choose a class. Teachers were encouraged to spend the summer with a different age group than the one they taught during the school year. This in itself was a break, and it provided an opportunity to look through the eyes of a younger or older child.

The next step was to ask all of the teachers to take down all of the school-year décor. This was a big job, but it gave an opportunity for tired décor to be put away for the summer and new to be in its place. Yearlong teachers were invited to spend the summer in a different room and have a new view for a couple of months--vacation!

Change is good, and a change from the regular curriculum was needed. Vacation Bible School curriculum was used to create an overall center theme for the summer. The summer staff worked together to plan a weekly and a daily focus for the VBS theme. One day of a VBS curriculum became a week of curriculum--with extra weeks to include patriotic themes. Each day included Bible, crafts, games, and a supportive theme. The Bible theme of the week was taught in a different way each day by utilizing books, puppets, drama, object lessons, and weekly chapel.

Each room was decorated to become a part of the overall VBS theme. Decorating was fun, and creativity was flowing by using the decorating ideas from the chosen Vacation Bible School curriculum. Over the years, the center has become a museum, an automotive car theme, a western town, a superhero metropolis, a forest wilderness, outer space, undersea exploration, and a jungle/rainforest. Even the decorating was a time for fun and fellowship with staff. Prizes were awarded for creativity and effect. All joined in the fun--including some of the spouses!

Weekly in-house fieldtrips and special activities enhanced the theme. My center was within walking distance of a city swimming pool. Each Friday afternoon became the weekly swim time. Pricing for the summer included the activities, and many options were given to parents. Parents were eager to sign up their children for a flexible summer schedule and even for drop-in when room is available. Children who did not attend during the school year, school-age children, homeschooled children, and even grandchildren from out of town were invited and encouraged to come. Being flexible gave the center a chance to impact many children with the love of Jesus.



The outcome was priceless. Teachers and supportive staff were ready to begin the school year refreshed even if they did not have real time off. A change of pace, view, and schedule made the difference. Think outside the box! Allow for staff to take a mental break! Be creative! Above all, HAVE A FUN AND REWARDING SUMMER!

## A message from the Chairman *Cont.*

being used of God to further HIS Kingdom work! At the heart of the Nazarene Educators Worldwide organization is a movement of people united to a commitment of being a servant and seeking ways to grow professionally. WE welcome your input and encourage your active participation in joining NEW!

My prayer for you and myself is to follow the scripture passage found in Psalm 90:12 "TEACH us to number our days aright..." JOIN us and may God bless you as you TEACH to change lives!

Dr. James D. Upchurch

Chairman

## Introducing Brad King *Cont.*

for the Health and Exercise Science department for three years. He was involved in starting the Kinesiology Program, as well as restructuring the Sports Management Program. He completed the necessary documentation to receive KSDE accreditation for the Physical Education Program.

Professor King's interests and hobbies include spending time with family, hunting and shooting, renovation projects, gardening, and watching sports and reading. Brad and his wife, Deb, have two married children, Abby and Kyle O'Neill and Brian and Jessica King. And their most important interest is spending time with their first grandbaby, Ainsley O'Neill.

# A prayer for children at risk

## NCN Magazine

Of all the children born today, around 80% live in parts of the world where extreme poverty is prevalent. Children may suffer from exploitation, sickness, malnourishment, abandonment, or war. In the face of these difficult facts, Christian organizations together make up the largest body working with these children at risk.

To help raise consciousness among Christians concerning these children, Viva Network is organizing a worldwide day of prayer on June 2 for children at risk. Individuals and churches are asked to set aside some time to pray for children on that day. Although we often think of children in other countries as being at risk, there are many children in the United States and other North American countries who are at risk.

Information on children at risk and the day of prayer can be obtained at Viva Network's website, [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org).

Here is a prayer litany that may help you pray for these children.

Gracious and Most Merciful God, your love is greater than any parental love. You told us that if we wish to be with you in your kingdom, we need to become like children. Conform us, O God, into the way of your Son, Jesus. We look to you, in awe of your loving kindness, as we fall down before you, wearied by our own suffering and the suffering of others. In confidence of your mercy and grace, we pray:

For your children, poor and abandoned,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your children who ask for daily bread and for the parents and community members who look for it,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your children too tired from a day's labor to even wonder about school,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your little ones sold into slavery who no longer know the love of a family,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your children affected by natural disaster, in places like Pakistan, Haiti, and Japan who sleep without proper shelter,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your little ones living in danger due to physical and sexual abuse,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your little ones whose parents have died due to war, disease, or crime, or have left home to look for jobs in far-off places,  
Lord, have mercy.

For your teenagers, in places like Baghdad, Detroit, Kansas City, and Ciudad Juarez, who have only known a neighborhood and a childhood burdened by violence,  
Lord, have mercy.

Open our eyes to the children suffering in our cities, neighborhoods, and homes.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together.

Open our minds to your wisdom as we face the complex challenges of children living in areas far away.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together.

Give us grace to continue to stand for the rights of children even when others have walked away.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together.

Give us wisdom to create the space for children to raise their voices that we may listen.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together.

Give us courage to raise our voices for children when they cannot speak for themselves.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together.

Give all children someone who will love and advocate for them.  
Help us, O God, to make it so.

Equip parents to nurture every aspect of the growth of their children.  
Help us, O God, to make it so.

Instruct our hearts and minds on current issues of injustice that affect children.

Help us, O God, to make it so.

Make our congregations safe places of rest and healing for children who have been traumatized.

Help us, O God, to make it so.



Let our ministries reach the whole child—physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

Help us, O God, to make it so.

Through the Holy Spirit's conviction, make us into people who desire to give of ourselves to improve the lives of children, and through your Spirit's guidance, grant us the wisdom and courage to do so. Transform us, we pray, that we may pray with our whole hearts, may your kingdom come and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

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The Board of General Superintendents of the Church of the Nazarene encourages the members and staff of local churches

to find ways to help children and youth realize they are welcomed and valued by our denomination. The coming months are a good time to plan activities to express appreciation to children and youth and involve them in services, events, and service projects.

Submitted by Beula Postlewait

## Obedience is better than Sacrifice

~part 2~

### Cindy Alsip

Educators work very hard. We spend more time with our students than their parents do on school days. Then we spend more time after school getting ready to spend time with them again the next day. We often sacrifice some of ourselves and some of our time with family to do this.

As much as our hard work pays off in the results of a well-run classroom and meeting student needs, I want to remind you that God desires obedience from us over sacrifice. As busy as we are, if God's purpose for your busy day is not behind the way you choose to invest your time, it just becomes a way to over-fill your days.

Determining the difference between God-purposed actions and busy work can be difficult. There are so many details and unexpected events involved in successfully providing effective instruction that it is easy to get lost in them and forget to be purposeful. Taking care of all the busy details often leads educators to sacrifice other things, sometimes unnecessarily.

I challenge you, as the school year closes, to connect with God as you take every step of your day. Doing this will help you remember to be purposeful and obedient in every choice and action you take in your classroom - a special place God has given you for the purpose of showing Him to his youngest and most precious children. You will find that God blesses this obedience, not with more time in the day, but with an ability to set yourself aside and let God become greater in your day.

1 Samuel 15:22 says: "Does The Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

# E3 Conference at General Assembly

## Dan Harris

The Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW) will again be hosting the E3 Conference during General Assembly. The conference will be held on June 21, 2013, in the Indianapolis Convention Center, rooms 206, 208 & 209 from 1:00-4:30pm. Registration is FREE!

There will be a number of workshops and breakout groups for educators at all levels. Presenters include NEW Chairman, Dr. Jim Upchurch, along with members of the NEW council. Below is a list of presenters and the educational topic they will be addressing.

Time	Location	Presenter	Description
1:00-2:00pm	Room 206	Dr. Jim Upchurch	General Session – Equipping, Encouraging, & Empowering Nazarene Educators/Breakout Networking Sessions
1:00-2:00pm	Room 208	Dr. Cindy Alsip	Generational Learning
1:00-2:00pm	Room 209	Becky Ramsey	Why Can't Learn
2:00-3:00pm	Room 206	Jan Wilton	Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf
2:00-3:00pm	Room 208	Janine Wilkins	Homeschooling: First Things First
2:00-3:00pm	Room 209	Marilyn Dominick	Working with Children in Poverty
3:30-4:30pm	Room 206	Jan Wilton	Getting Their Attention and Keeping It
3:30-4:30pm	Room 208	Dr. Jim Upchurch	Current Challenges Facing Educators
3:30-4:30pm	Room 209	Marilyn Dominick	Math They'll Remember



You can get more information and register for the E3 Conference at the following link:

[http://web.nazarene.org/site/PageNavigator/GA13\\_SDMI\\_NEW](http://web.nazarene.org/site/PageNavigator/GA13_SDMI_NEW)

## Sower vs. Gardener *Cont.*

Our ability to pray for the needs that we see as well as those that we can only imagine is a powerful tool in the garden of our classroom.

Too often teachers are satisfied to allow the seed that "...fell on good soil...that produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times" (NIV) to define our teaching ability. We allow ourselves to be pleased that some students did well on the test, and we decide that we have done our job. I realize that some students will learn in spite of the teacher or the methods used. Those are not the students I use to determine whether or not I am a success as a teacher. I want to use the fact that students have improved from their last test as my measuring stick. Did I take D students and work with them until they reached a C? Did I praise their improvement to where the C was not enough, and they believed they could reach the B? Did I focus on the facts of a lesson, or did I analyze and teach them as individual students to know how they could best learn and achieve that miracle of accomplishment for themselves not only in my classroom, but in other classrooms as well?

When I make the investment of a true gardener, I can rejoice in the harvest. I remember one student whom I worked with and tutored throughout high school. We worked and toiled, and each accomplishment was slow and difficult. It seemed as if my efforts were not producing nearly what I had hoped to accomplish. But I remember the report when

the efforts began to pay off. She was no longer my student, but she came back to let me know that she had finished her four-year nursing program. She had graduated with honors. She said, "I just kept doing over and over what you said to do. I would read it; I would say it out loud; I would write it out. And, suddenly it just started clicking." We definitely rejoiced. The true victory had come a long time after she had left my classroom, but I am so thankful that she came back to allow me to rejoice in the harvest.

Unfortunately, as a teacher, there are those times when we have given everything we have, and the harvest is just not as plentiful as we desired. We do not know if there was a victory that came after a child has left our classroom. That time of disappointment must be coupled with the promise that Paul talked about in I Corinthians 3:5-9. Sometimes we are only called to plant, another teacher will water, and eventually another teacher will see and experience the increase. We must realize we are all only God's fellow workers in His field working with His children. "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." (NIV) We must do our best with the time and abilities that God has given us in our classrooms. Yet, when it comes time for me to turn over my field to another teacher, I want my students to feel that I have been a gardener who nurtured the plants God gave me for the year, and I was not just a sower that threw out some seeds and hoped they would take root.

## THE NEW

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