



Making a Big Difference in a Small Place

Small-Town Pastors' Conference

A conference tailored to pastors and wives in town and country settings

Featuring...



Paul Nyquist

President, Moody Bible Institute; from small-town roots; author, including *The Post Church Christian* and soon-to-be-released *Prepare: Living by Faith in an Increasingly Hostile Culture*



Don Sunukjian

Professor of Preaching and Chair, Department of Christian Ministry and Leadership, Talbot School of Theology; longtime pastor; frequent conference speaker; author, including *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming the Truth with Clarity and Relevance*



Michael Svigel

Professor and Chair, Department of Theological Studies, Dallas Theological Seminary; raised in a small town in Minnesota; author, including *RetroChristianity: Reclaiming the Forgotten Faith*



Thomas White

President, Cedarville University; small-town pastor's kid; author, including *Franchising McChurch: Feeding Our Obsession with Easy Christianity*

April 27 – 29, 2015

Morton, Illinois



**Rural Home
Missionary Association**



Come Expectantly!

Ron Klassen

RHMA Executive Director



Can God do big things in small places? He certainly can – and has. (Perhaps you can give testimony to this!) Small size does not have to translate into small results. I'd be hard-pressed to name anything that excites me more than stories of how a small-town church is making a big difference – in its small town and beyond. You'll hear such stories at our conference. And, you'll be stirred by the possibilities of what God might yet do in your small place.

At this conference you will find . . .

- . . . most everything tailored to smaller contexts.**
- . . . speakers with a heart for town and country places.**
- . . . affirmation for your commitment to your small place.**

Please come! Come expecting to be encouraged and stretched. Come with the expectation that you will return to your place of ministry with renewed passion and vigor to see God work in big ways. Don't be surprised if you leave our conference with some big dreams for your small place.

For more information about RHMA,
go to www.rhma.org.

RHMA

Box 300, Morton, IL 61550

Call toll-free: 866-263-2350

info@rhma.org



Seminar Leaders

(in addition to those on the front cover)



Brad Iverson

Executive Director,
Church and Community
Development, AWANA;
longtime small-town pastor



Nell Sunukjian

Adjunct Professor of Christian
Ministry and Leadership,
Talbot School of Theology;
longtime pastor's wife;
frequent conference speaker;
former Director of Women's
Ministries at EVFree Fullerton



Jason McConnell

Small-town pastor, Franklin
United Church and East Franklin
Union Church – both located in
dairying/farming communities
in Vermont; professor, RHMA's
TACT Program



Kendra Smiley

Host of the nationwide
daily radio program *Live Life
Intentionally*; frequent women's
speaker; author of several books;
she and her husband live on a
farm in Central Illinois; Illinois
Mother of the Year, 2001



Barney Wells

Professor, Lincoln Christian
Seminary; longtime country church
pastor; consultant and professor,
RHMA's TACT Program; author,
including *Leading Through Change:
Shepherding the Town and Country
Church in a New Era*

Continuing Education Credit

You can receive 1.3 CEU credits by attending all sessions of the Small-Town Pastors' Conference. Credits will be issued through Lancaster Bible College and Graduate School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. A fee of \$10.00 is payable at the conference upon completion of a form which will be available in the conference packets. LBC will mail you a CEU certificate following the conference.

Seminars

Tuesday Morning Seminars (90 minutes)

Ron Klassen

What Does a Healthy Church Look Like in Rural America?

Is improving stats the answer to this seminar's title (like increasing attendance and giving)? "But," you say, "I live in an isolated context with declining population." Did you know that the New Testament provides an example of a pretty healthy church (albeit with some shortcomings), small in size, located in a declining small town?

Jason McConnell

Rural Ministry in Biblical Perspective – Exploring Our Big God in the Small Towns of Scripture

This seminar aims to establish a biblical foundation for small-town ministry and inspire you in this important work. We will take a journey through biblical history and examine how God strategically used small towns and small-town people to advance the gospel.

Kendra Smiley (Women)

Heart Clutter – What to Throw Away, Give Away, and Keep

Your heart can be like your kitchen "junk drawer," a place where trash mingles with treasures. With tender loving care, it needs to be cleaned out regularly. Kendra will take you into her own heart and furnish you with guidelines for the job.

Don Sunukjian

James – Miscellaneous Bits of Wisdom or an Unfolding Unified Theme?

Many commentators suggest that James' letter is a loose collection of exhortations without logical connections. Not so. The letter is focused on the trials of James' friends. This seminar will show how James' purpose through the entire

book is to tell his friends and us how to act, both as individuals and as a church, when we find ourselves in stressful and difficult situations.

Michael Svigel

Church Classic: In Search of Authentic Church in Small Towns

Without a big budget, bulging facility, burgeoning growth, and booming voice, what's a small church to do in our "Big Box" culture? This seminar goes back to the basics of authentic church: the essential marks of orthodoxy, order, and ordinances; and the essential works of evangelism, edification, and exultation. We'll discuss how smaller churches might actually do best what God wants done most.

Barney Wells

Rural Ministry 101

This seminar is an orientation to rural ministry, geared primarily for new pastors and wives who are just getting started. Seasoned pastors and wives are welcome to attend for a refresher course!

Thomas White

The Errors of Higher Education Coming to a Small Town Near You...Soon

This seminar will address the challenges of evolution, postmodernism, historic Adam and Eve, same sex attraction, transgender orientation, and open theism. What do these challenges mean for the small-town church?

Tuesday Afternoon Seminars

(90 minutes)

Brad Iverson

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers in Town and Country Churches

A great challenge is staffing our churches' ministries. Do we have a strategy for recruiting volunteers? We often fail to retain volunteers, which makes us need to recruit even more. What are the best practices to recruit and retain volunteers?

Seminars *(Continued)*

Jason McConnell

Rural Ministry in Historical Perspective – Exploring Our Big God in the Small Towns of Church History

From the early church fathers to the 21st century, God has used small towns and small-town people to make amazing contributions to his kingdom. This seminar is intended to stir your heart with the stories of nine overlooked small-town figures from church history who influenced our world in profound ways.

Don and Nell Sunukjian

Stamina and Joy for the Long Haul

Don and Nell will share biblical concepts and personal experiences that have sustained them through decades of ministry.

Barney Wells

Ministry Beyond the Churchyard

This seminar will focus on meeting the needs of the rural community, and the pastor as a community leader.

Wednesday Seminars

(60 minutes, repeated in the afternoon)

Brad Iverson

The Biblical Importance of Children's Ministry in a Town and Country Context

Might some in our congregations not see the importance of children's ministry? Is it possible that undervaluing children is actually keeping your church from growing?

Jason McConnell

First-Person Narrative Preaching – Connecting Our Big God to Small-Town Culture

Have you noticed that small-town people tend to tell a lot of stories? Have you noticed that the Bible is full of stories? Narratives are a natural intersection between Small-Town Street and

Bible Boulevard. This seminar will demonstrate why first-person narrative preaching is a good expository model for small-town churches, and it will show you how to do it!

Paul Nyquist

Understanding Millennials

This seminar will explore the largest generation in the history of the United States, the millennial generation. Gifted, passionate, and creative, millennials are rapidly exiting the church. We will discuss ways to engage this generation with the established church.

Don Sunukjian

Increasing Relevancy in Your Preaching

Skills for increasing relevancy in your preaching will be explored through examples and group interaction.

Nell Sunukjian (Women)

Why Every Small-Town Church Needs a Women's Ministry

No church is too small for a women's ministry. God's Word has much to say about how women can minister to one another in any size church and community. The pastor's wife can be key to influencing and encouraging a women's ministry.

Michael Svigel

Moving Furniture: A Return to Pulpit/Altar-Centered Worship

As local churches continue to wrestle with what they're supposed to be doing during Sunday morning worship, few consider the simplicity and sensibility of the early church's approach to worship. There's something moving about returning to a form of worship that intentionally centers on proclamation *and* consecration. This seminar explains the "whats" and "whys" and "hows" of pulpit/altar-centered worship.

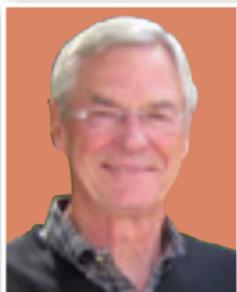
What others are saying...



"If you're a pastor in a small town or pastor in a small church and feel like no one really understands what's going on in your life, this conference is for you. The atmosphere is warm and contagious. The teaching is quality! The people are authentic and God greatly strengthened my heart when I was there. I highly recommend the RHMA conference."

Chip Ingram

President and radio teacher, Living on the Edge; senior pastor, Venture Christian Church, Los Gatos, California; member, RHMA's Board of Reference



"My experience is that there is nothing like RHMA's Small-Town Pastors' Conference. It's rare indeed to have such focus, purpose, fellowship, and encouragement."

Kent Hughes

Senior Pastor Emeritus, College Church, Wheaton, Illinois; member, RHMA's Board of Reference; conference speaker; author, including "Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome"



"We want and need to be encouraged in ministry by those who understand our situations, have experienced our challenges, and share our joys. RHMA offers just such encouragement and training for small town and rural church leaders. The annual conference serves as a great opportunity to develop regular relationships with pastoral leaders in similar settings, and to receive training targeted for the special needs, concerns and opportunities of churches that are the backbone of North American Christianity."

Bryan Chapell

Senior Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois; conference speaker; author, including "Christ-Centered Worship"

Schedule

Monday, April 27

- 3:00-5:00 p.m. Registration at RHMA
310 E. Courtland, Morton
- 5:30 p.m. Supper at Grace Church
1325 E. Jefferson, Morton
- 6:00-6:45 p.m. Bookstore open
- 7:00 p.m. Plenary Session
Storyteller: Jason McConnell
Speaker: Don Sunukjian
Quick as a Wink and a Snail's Pace
(1 Corinthians 10:13)
- 8:30 p.m. Dessert and Fellowship
Hosted by the RHMA Board of Directors

Tuesday, April 28

- Breakfast at your hotel or on your own
- 8:00 a.m. Prayer Meeting with Carey Gossen
- 8:45 a.m. Plenary Session
Speaker: Thomas White
By Faith (Hebrews 11)
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:00-10:45 a.m. Bookstore open
- 10:45 a.m. Seminars
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- 12:30-1:30 p.m. Bookstore open
- Afternoon Activities OR seminars
- 1:30-3:15 p.m. Seminars
- 5:30 p.m. Supper
- 6:00-6:45 p.m. Bookstore open
- 7:00 p.m. Plenary Session
Storyteller: Jason McConnell
Speaker: Michael Svigel
Doing Best What God Wants Done Most



Schedule *(Continued)*

Wednesday, April 29

Breakfast at your hotel or on your own

8:00 a.m. Prayer Meeting with Carey Gossen

8:45 a.m. Plenary Session

Speaker: Paul Nyquist

Small Meal, Big God (John 6:1-14)

10:00 a.m. Break

10:00-10:30 a.m. Bookstore open

10:30 a.m. Seminars

(repeated in the afternoon)

11:30 a.m. Lunch / Options

Fellowship Hall: *Fellowship with other pastors and wives*

Gym: *Get-to-Know-RHMA presentation*

12:45 -1:45 p.m. Seminars

(repeat of morning seminars)

2:00 p.m. Ladies' Tea with Nell Sunukjian

Men's Dessert Forum with Don Sunukjian, Michael Svigel, Paul Nyquist

5:30 p.m. Supper

6:00-6:45 p.m. Bookstore open

7:00 p.m. Closing Plenary Session

Storyteller: Jason McConnell

Speaker: Don Sunukjian

The Magnificent Defeat
(Genesis 32:22-32)



Information

REGISTRATION COSTS

POSTMARKED BY APRIL 13:

Pastor ONLY:	\$100
Pastor & Wife:	\$130
Full-time Student:	\$40
Full-time Student & Wife:	\$70

After April 13: ADD \$20 to the total registration cost.

Registration includes lunches, suppers, and conference materials.

Registration costs are non-refundable after April 13.

Space is limited. First-come, first-served basis.

LODGING

Special rates have been secured at the following hotels:

Holiday Inn Express and Suites Double/Single -
140 E. Ashland, Morton, IL 61550 \$109.00
Phone: 309-263-4400 (special rates expire 3/28/2015)

Best Western Ashland House
201 E. Ashland, Morton, IL 61550 Double - \$81.99
Phone: 309-263-5116 (special rates expire 4/17/2015)

Baymont Inn and Suites Double - \$79.00
210 E. Ashland, Morton, IL 61550
Phone: 309-266-8888 (special rates expire 3/29/2015)

Quality Inn Double/King - \$74.99 - \$79.99
115 E. Ashland, Morton, IL 61550
Phone: 309-266-8310 (special rates expire 3/31/2015)

Travelodge Double/King - \$70.99
101 E. Ashland, Morton, IL 61550
Phone: 309-266-1600 (special rates expire 3/31/2015)

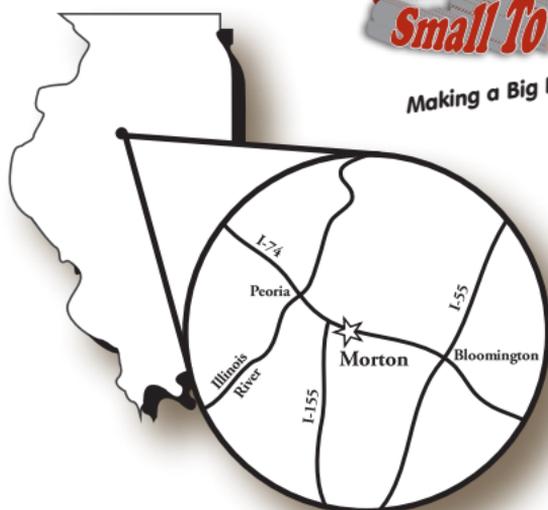
All hotels provide a complimentary breakfast.
The Holiday Inn, Best Western, and Baymont Inn have indoor pools. To make your reservation, please call the hotel of your choice. Mention RHMA to receive the reduced rate.

We encourage you to make your reservation early, as space is limited at these rates.

CHILDREN

While families are important to us, this conference is for pastors and wives. As a courtesy to our other participants we ask that no children attend with you. Thank you.

Location



ALL SESSIONS HELD AT
Grace Church
1325 E. Jefferson
Morton, IL 61550

RHMA IS SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT MANY SMALL-TOWN PASTORS CANNOT AFFORD EXPENSIVE PASTORS' CONFERENCES. THE ACTUAL COST OF THIS CONFERENCE IS CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN THE REGISTRATION FEE, BUT RHMA IS COMMITTED TO RAISING THE DIFFERENCE. DURING THE CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE PROVIDED TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARD EXPENSES, IF YOU WISH TO DO SO.



RHMA appreciates the financial support of the Village of Morton, which helps with the cost of producing and mailing this brochure and other conference marketing endeavors.

Registration

You may register online (www.rhma.org) or fill out this form and mail to RHMA, Box 300, Morton, IL 61550.

Name _____

Wife's name (if attending) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Church/Ministry _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Email _____

Registration cost if postmarked by April 13: Check where appropriate

Pastor ONLY \$100 Pastor & Wife \$130

Full-time Student \$40 Full-time Student & Wife \$70

Registration cost _____

After April 13: Add \$20 to the total registration cost _____

Special Event fee _____ x \$5.00 = _____

Total \$ _____

To help us plan for seminar materials and space, please indicate your choices below.

Tuesday Morning Seminars

Pastor Wife Title

Choose ONE per person

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>What Does a Healthy Church Look Like in Rural America?</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Rural Ministry in Biblical Perspective – Exploring Our Big God in the Small Towns of Scripture</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Heart Clutter – What to Throw Away, Give Away, and Keep</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>James – Miscellaneous Bits of Wisdom or an Unfolding Unified Theme?</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Church Classic: In Search of Authentic Church in Small Towns</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Rural Ministry 101</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The Errors of Higher Education Coming to a Small Town Near You...Soon</i> |

Tuesday Afternoon Seminars

Note: The Tuesday afternoon activities listed on the next page coincide with these afternoon seminars.

Choose ONE per person

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers in Town and Country Churches</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Rural Ministry in Historical Perspective – Exploring Our Big God in the Small Towns of Church History</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Stamina and Joy for the Long Haul</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Ministry Beyond the Churchyard</i> |

Wednesday Seminars

Choose TWO per person (each seminar is repeated)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>The Biblical Importance of Children's Ministry in a Town and Country Context</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>First-Person Narrative Preaching – Connecting Our Big God to Small-Town Culture</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Understanding Millennials</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Increasing Relevancy in Your Preaching</i> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Why Every Small-Town Church Needs a Women's Ministry</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Moving Furniture: A Return to Pulpit/Altar-Centered Worship</i> |

Ladies' Tea

Men's Dessert Forum

(continued on the next page)

THREE WAYS TO PAY

1. Make check payable to RHMA and mail with this form.
2. Or pay with: _____ Visa _____ MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____
3 Digit Security Code

Signature _____

3. Or register online (www.rhma.org) and pay there with a credit card or from your bank account.

Questions? Give us a call: 866-263-2350.

Activities

Tuesday afternoon

Instead of seminars, the following activities are options for Tuesday afternoon. Please check the activity of your choice.

Some activities have limited space and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

To help us with planning, please indicate your choices below.

Tuesday, April 27 Activities

(please check one per person)

Pastor Wife Activity

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Caterpillar Visitors Center (\$5.00/person) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Lincoln Sites (\$5.00/person) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ladies Shopping (no cost) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trap Shooting and Fishing (no cost) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Golf Outing (fee to be determined) |

The Lincoln Sites

"Mr. & Mrs. Abe" will be our tour guides on this trip to Springfield. We will visit the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln home. As a legislator, Lincoln had been instrumental in moving the capital from Vandalia to Springfield. The Old State Capitol is a state historic site that is a beautiful recreation of the statehouse as it was during Lincoln's years and the site of the famous "House Divided" speech. His body lay in state in this building as a crowd of 75,000 mourners filed past to pay their last respects. The Lincoln home, restored to its 1860 appearance, is the only home that Lincoln ever owned. Purchased in 1844, he and Mary lived there for 17 years. The cost for the tour is \$5.00 per person.



Bass Pro Shops – East Peoria

(Ten minutes from Morton. Driving maps will be available.)

Bass Pro Shops is an outdoor retail leader in hunting, camping, nature gifts, outdoor cooking, and much more. They have become one of America's premier outdoor retailers with destination outdoor retail stores across America and Canada, serving over 75 million sportsmen a year. Each store is unique and offers a truly unforgettable shopping experience — as close to the Great Outdoors as you can get indoors!



Ladies Shopping

(Limited to 15 people)

Take a van ride to Bloomington for an afternoon of indoor mall shopping. Included among the stores are: American Eagle Outfitters, Back Store, Bath & Body Works, Bergner's, Buckle, Christopher & Banks, Claire's, Cuddly Friends, C.J. Banks, deb shop, Earthbound Trading Company, Finish Line, Foot Locker, Gap, JCPenney, Hallmark, Hickory Farms, Kohl's, Lids, Limited, Macy's, maurices, MC Sports, Old Navy, Payless Shoesource, Sears, White Barn Candle Co., Wild Country.

Trap Shooting and Fishing

(Limited to 15 people)

Weather permitting, we will fish and shoot clay pigeons at an RHMA friend's hobby farm. Guns and fishing gear will be provided at no cost.



Golf Outing

(Limited to 15 people)

Weather and interest permitting, we will schedule a golf outing for Tuesday afternoon. Please mark "Golf Outing" if you are interested in participating.

The cost will be determined. We will contact you before the conference with further information.

Caterpillar Visitors Center

The Caterpillar Visitors Center in Peoria is a fascinating look at the company – from the humble beginnings of the first tractor to the company's present-



day leadership in building infrastructure and powering the planet. You'll enjoy experiencing Caterpillar on a self-guided journey of interactive displays and exhibits. Climb into the seat of a massive two-story Cat® 797 truck and take a virtual ride into a customer's mine site down a haul road. Unleash your inner engineer and design your very own Cat machine. Hop onto a simulator and see first-hand what it's like to operate equipment the way real-life operators do. Experience the sheer massive volume of the rugged Cat machines and learn of the customer-driven design and innovation that has made Caterpillar a world-leading manufacturer. The cost is \$5.00 per person.

Wednesday noon

Get-to-Know-RHMA Presentation

Perhaps you are wondering, "What is RHMA and what does RHMA do?" In this luncheon meeting, information will be shared about the expanding and broad-reaching ministries of RHMA.



Box 300
Morton, IL 61550

*Join us at RHMA's
Small-Town Pastors'
Conference!*

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