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From the Director's Desk

In March, my husband Fred, our videographer Jon, and I were traveling through Georgia (filming for a DVD project) when we decided that we just *had* to have a meal of authentic Southern BBQ. Using Jon's I-Phone, we quickly found our destination: *Speedi Pig Barbeque*. It was a good thing that *Speedi Pig Barbeque* had so many "rave reviews" online—because outward appearances would *not* have been enough to get me in the front door! Once inside though, the charm of the place, coupled with the delicious smells, calmed my fears. When we ordered from the menu, I selected a pulled pork sandwich, while Fred and Jon decided to split The Sampler. The Sampler offered a huge variety of "all things pork." But just to make sure, the fellows asked the waitress if she thought it was something they could split. Her response indicated that, apparently, NO ONE had ever split The Sampler before: "Well...I guess you *could*...I suppose, if you're still hungry afterwards, you can always order something else." When The Sampler arrived...it was our turn to be shocked. The sheer super-abundance of the serving was amazing! There was clearly no need to "order something else."

In a similar way, I think that we often really under-estimate God's super-abundant provision for us. Recently, MNA Special Needs Ministries partnered with other Christian organizations to bring a Joni and Friends Disability Ministry Conference to Lancaster PA. In uncertain economic times, we hardly had the financial resources for a "pulled pork sandwich" but God—in His super-abundant generosity—gave us "The Sampler"—and much more! We had over 350 attendees at the conference, and about 25% of those were from PCA churches! From all reports, people came away challenged, inspired, and better equipped for "*making the Gospel—the good news of the coming of the Kingdom—accessible to all, in word and deed!*" Praise God for His super-abundant goodness to us!

In His Name, Steph Hubach

Meet the MNA SNM Advisory Team



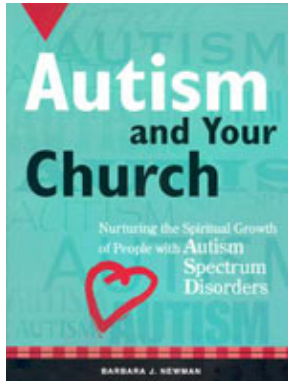
How many people do you know who have worked together for two years on a launch team for a new ministry, but have never met each other? Until October 2009, this was true for the MNA Special Needs Ministries Advisory Team. The Joni and Friends Disability Ministry Conference in Lancaster PA was our *first* opportunity to be in the same place at the same time! After over two years of regular conference calls and countless emails, we were finally able to "put a face with a name and a voice!" Only Sue Jakes and Lynn Wheeler were not able to be with us. Team member Rev. Tim Locke attended the conference, along with his wife Debbie, but was unable to stay for the dinner at which this picture was taken.

We do hope that you'll pray for us regularly. We have many big items on our to-do list this year. Identifying resources for educational gift packs, creating a DVD Christian education series on disability ministry, putting together a working group on the subject of communion for people with intellectual disabilities, establishing networks, and speaking at various churches and conferences (as many of our team members are now doing on behalf of MNA SNM)—to name a few! Please pray that God will be glorified through our work together!

Front Row: Lois Denier,
Steph Hubach, Margaret
Ramage, and Ruth
Brewbaker
Back Row: Joel Wallace
and Martie Kwasny



Autism and Your Church



Autism and Your Church
By Barbara J. Newman
is available at
www.clcnetwork.org

Another exciting aspect of the Joni and Friends Disability Ministry Conference was having Barbara J. Newman, author of *Autism and Your Church: Nurturing the Spiritual Growth of People with Autism Spectrum Disorders*, as a workshop speaker. Barbara taught three different workshops on autism-related topics. Some of the insights she shared can be found in her book, which also has a companion DVD available to buy.

Depending on the statistics used, approximately one in every 100-150 children are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children with Down syndrome constitute 1 out of every 800 births—so that gives you a bit of an

idea of how many children with ASDs are now part of our schools, communities and our churches.

How prepared is your church to minister to and alongside of children or adults with ASD and their families? This book is a great resource that addresses:

- God's Handiwork
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Common Areas of Difference in Individuals with ASD
- Ten Strategies for Including Individuals with ASD
- An Action Plan
- Reproducible Resources

For more information go to:
www.clcnetwork.org

Upcoming Opportunities!



Melanie Muzio,
Millbrook PCA,
Millbrook, AL

Meet one of my new friends, Mel Muzio. Mel traveled all the way from Alabama to the Joni and Friends Disability Ministry Conference held in Lancaster PA. Mel attended in order to learn more about autism and how to better serve children and families affected by ASD.

But I learned a lot about blindness and vision impairment from spending time with Mel. That's because Mel has low vision. Mel helped me better understand effective ways to communicate with people who have vision loss—both interpersonally and in a formal setting, such as a conference or a workshop. You can find tips like those Mel shared with me on the website of the American Foundation for the Blind at www.afb.org.

Here are some upcoming opportunities for *you* to continue to learn and grow in your understanding of disability ministry:

- PCA Great Expectations Children's Ministry National Conference, 12-14 January 2010, Atlanta GA (www.ppacep.org)
- PCA Mercy Ministry Conference, 11-13 March 2010, Chattanooga TN (www.pca-mna.org)
- Accessibility Summit 2010, 23-24 April 2010, McLean Bible Church, Tysons Corner VA (www.mcleanbible.org)

Your Prayers Matter...

*"For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding."
Proverbs 2:6*

- Praise God for the growing interest in MNA Special Needs Ministries both inside and outside of the PCA!
- Please pray for on-going wisdom in guiding and encouraging churches that seek out our assistance.
- Please pray that the authoritative Word of God will inform all that we do

and say in helping PCA churches to make the Gospel accessible to all.

- Please pray for growth in committed financial giving to MNA SNM, allowing us the freedom to pursue the many exciting opportunities God has put before us in 2010.