

the

Fountain of Life Fellowship Monthly Newsletter

October 2010

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*Grounded in the Gospel,
we Gather to Grow in the Gospel
and Scatter to Spread the Gospel
for the Glory of God.*

Inside This Issue

1	Pastor's Note
3	Fall LTG
4	Ignition Update 2:42 Update Baby News
5	Out of the Salt Shaker
6	Prayer Guide More Baby News
7	Progressive Dinner
8	Birthdays Care for Shut Ins Special Offering
9	Domestic Tips Ministry Updates
10	Trunk or Treat
11	Budget Ministry Schedule

Pastor's Note by Matt Ford

Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism and the Preeminent Christ

Christian Smith is a professor of sociology at Notre Dame, the Director of the Center for the Sociology of Religion and Society, and Principal Investigator of the National Study of Youth and Religion. His book *Soul Searching; The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* won the 2006 *Christianity Today* Book Award for Christianity and Culture.

Soul Searching is the culmination of a huge research project studying the faith of American teens. The greatest force of the book comes in Smith's finding that, whatever religion the teens claim officially, "the de facto dominant religion among contemporary U.S. teenagers is what we might well call 'Moralistic Therapeutic Deism.'"¹

"The creed of this religion," Smith writes, "sounds something like this:"

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.

¹ Smith, Christian, *Soul Searching*. Oxford University Press, 2005. Quotes taken from pages 162-165.

2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

If we love Jesus Christ and want to see His Kingdom expand in our world and in our children, these findings are worthy of our serious consideration. Ask yourself – do the five elements of the “creed” listed above sound anything like Christianity? Because this is what a large amount of supposedly Christian teens and adults believe about God.

Let's define these terms in order to more fully understand the religious current in which we live.

The trend is *moralistic*...

The goal is to be, in general, a good person who feels good about himself. It doesn't really matter to what religion you adhere. Be good and, with God, you're good.

The trend is *therapeutic*...

As Smith writes, “This is not a religion of repentance of sin...of living as a servant of a sovereign divine...of basking in God's love and grace...etc...” Rather, “What appears to be the actual dominant religion...is centrally about feeling good, happy, secure, at peace.” Therein, the content of one's faith is somewhat irrelevant. As Smith paraphrases, “As long as one is happy, why bother with being able to talk about the belief content of one's faith?”

Finally, the trend is *deistic*...

This god keeps His distance, and is fairly unconcerned with everyday details of one's life. He doesn't ask for much and desires nothing like passionate worship, but is content to arrive occasionally to bring aid in time of need. Smith writes,

This God is not demanding. He actually can't be, because his job is to solve our problems and make people feel good...God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist.

The evidence says this is what our neighbors, and perhaps some of us and our children believe, or will at least be tempted to believe.

So what's the answer? As usual, it's the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture. The Gospel gives the corrective, liberating truth:

Christ is righteousness...

Moralism fails because the obvious and biblical truth is that we are not good and cannot be good. We need a perfect righteousness to please a Holy God, that will only come outside of us through the Person of Jesus Christ and His perfect life, atoning death, and victorious resurrection. It is faith in Christ that saves, not being good (Romans 3.9-13, 21-26; Gal. 3.10-14).

Christ is the treasure...

The therapeutic fails because it is idolatrous. It looks for ultimate satisfaction in a created thing instead of Christ Himself. It is a subtle but essential distinction: Christ did not come to make us happy...in something else. He did not come to help us grow in our idolatry. He came to thrill us with Himself. In fact, He may remove earthly pleasures to wean us from them and content us in Him. Heaven is, quite literally, to see His glory (John 17.24; Matthew 13.44-46).

Christ is Lord...

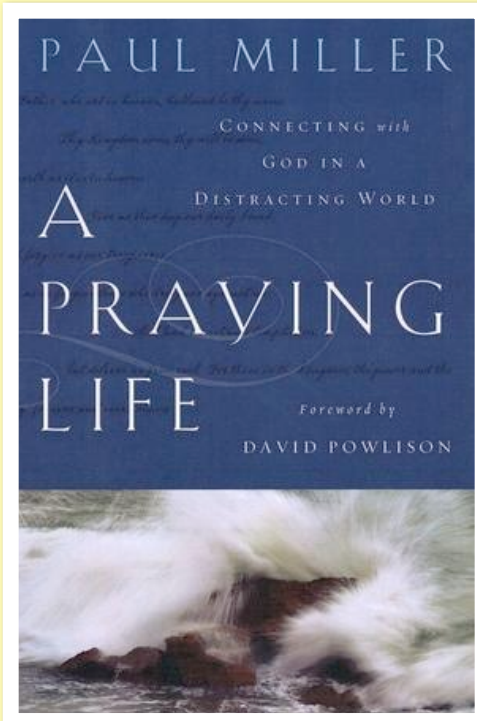
Deism fails because it is based on a truncated unreal God who is too small to be Lord of all. Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Therefore, as He saves He makes demands that He enables in His people. We take up our crosses and follow Him in obedience, longing to please Him in all respects. We are on a mission for Him, and He will never leave us (Luke 14.25-33; Matthew 28.18-20).

Brothers and sisters, resist this American “gospel” and love, live, and proclaim the real thing: the justifying, satisfying Lord of all, the Preeminent Jesus Christ (Col. 1.15-20). Our confused culture is in great need of Him.

Pastor Matt

Fall Life Together Groups (It's Not Too Late!)

At FOLF we are convicted from Scripture that the Christian life is life together. That's why we have what we call “Life Together Groups”: small groups that meet in homes for the following purposes: 1) fellowship – our relationship with enjoyment of God infused into our relationships with one another, 2) sanctification – our lives continually and progressively changed to live as righteously as we already are in Christ, and 3) care – we want to know one another's needs and meet them as best we can.



Presently we have three groups to choose from: the Ford's, which will meet on Wednesday evenings, and the Mirth's and the Swenson's, which will meet on Thursdays. This fall we will be studying the acclaimed, *A Praying Life*, by Paul Miller (\$10).

So find what night works to you, and commit to a group. You will have an excellent opportunity to grow as a Christian and as a part of this community.

Everyone is welcome!

Ignition Update

contributed by Scott Clair

This last month in Ignition we started a series on Evangelism - taking a serious look at Christ's call to make disciples of all nations. Throughout the whole series we have focused on the gospel. We understand that if we don't have the gospel right then we may have a misunderstanding of Christ and if we have a misunderstanding of Christ then we may be proclaiming a false gospel. Not only have we focused on the gospel during this time, but we have also taken biblical truths and applied them to the practicality of real life. One of the ways we have done this is by taking a whole night to discuss reasons why we don't evangelize. Lack of prayer, fear of man, not being prepared, ignoring our surroundings, and refusing to accept that Christ has commanded us to be obedient are all reasons we tend to not evangelize. Our prayer is that we will see this as our calling and therefore obey Christ's command to proclaim his gospel to all people.

2:42 Update

contributed by Scott Clair

This last month we continued our study through the book of John, focusing on Jesus' statement that he is the "True Vine". This statement would have carried significant weight to his disciples, since historically Israel had always been known to be God's vine. By making this declaration, Jesus was clearly stating that no longer was Israel the focus of God's plan for salvation but rather only through him would his disciples, and subsequently all believers, be saved. Through abiding in Him, we would then glorify the Father by bearing fruit. This truth led us to a discussion regarding what it means to bear fruit in which we concluded that there is no such thing as a Christian who does not bear fruit. We look forward to October in which we will continue in our study of John and learn more about His love for us and the love we are to have for one another.

There's a Baby on the Way!



Congratulations to Vince and Laura Cabral who are expecting their third baby! Isaiah and Amaris are due to meet their little brother in February! Congratulations Cabrals!

Out of the Salt Shaker

contributed by Julia Bailey

Who Do You Serve?

A shrine is being constructed next door, adjacent to the corner of my yard. I find myself hoping that the shrubs I planted earlier this year will block the view by next spring.

I'm not sure why the shrine troubles me so. I've lived in the neighborhood for over 30 years. The neighbors, while new, seem nice; they're quiet, and keep their place neat. The neighborhood has had its share of Buddhists, Muslims and other religions over the years. I've worked—and played—with both devout and secular Animists, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Buddhists, and never had a problem. And since I don't believe the gods are real, I'm not threatened by any concept of "negative spiritual energy" from the shrine.

I wonder if, perhaps, as I look out my window while working each day, the shrine serves as a daily reminder of how sad it is when people cling to false gods. It really doesn't matter whether the shrine is a faux-rock grotto like the one next door, the Sports Channel, or your kids. As Bob Dylan said, "you're gonna have to serve somebody"

As I work, play, and live, in this pluralist society with its wonderful wealth of color and diversity, it's good for me—and you—to be reminded of two things.

First of all, whom do we serve? Oh, I know, we're all good church-going folks, and the easy answer is "Jesus". But it's a good idea to keep an eye on your Daytimer and your checkbook, and see if they agree.

Second, there is the tension of living in community and yet as a witness to this anthology of lifestyles and beliefs. When do we speak and when do we remain silent? When do we let our actions speak (and what do they say)? I have no easy answers, and I suspect, neither do you.

And perhaps that is why the shrine next door discomforts me. Any maybe that's a good thing. The best we can do is seek the guidance of the Spirit, and be attentive to his promptings.

*You may be a construction worker working on a home
You may be living in a mansion or you might live in a dome
You might own guns and you might even own tanks
You might be somebody's landlord you might even own banks.*

*But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes
You're gonna have to serve somebody.
~Bob Dylan*

Prayer Guide

contributed by Matt Ford

Monday – Growth in the Gospel

Pray Ephesians 3.14-21

Pray that we would be individually and corporately grounded on the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. **Pray** that our Life Together Groups would be catalysts for substantial fellowship, sanctification, and practical care.

Tuesday – The Family

Pray Psalm 78.4; 112.1-2

Pray for the marriages of our church, that they would derive their wisdom and strength from the Gospel. **Pray** for the parents; that they would have the grace, wisdom, diligence and endurance to raise their children in the Gospel. **Pray** for the nursery, children's worship, and youth group ministries of the church. **Pray** for the leaders and the students involved, that God would give grace and power to transform lives.

Wednesday – The Sick and Suffering

Pray 1 Peter 1.3-9

Pray for sick and suffering in our church. **Pray** that God would heal physically, spiritually, emotionally, and relationally. **Pray** that we would be enabled to cling to Him throughout the difficulties and find Christ faithful.

Thursday – Growth of the Gospel

Pray Matthew 28.18-20

Pray that we would be wise, joyful, and bold in sharing the Gospel. **Pray** that hearts would be opened to believe.

Friday – BSTC (Haitian Partner Church)

Pray 2 Thessalonians 1.11-12

Pray for Pastor Abner, that he might be full of faith and wisdom and faithful in preaching the Gospel. **Pray** for the congregation, that they would be strengthened by and bold in the Gospel. And **pray** for those orphans, that they would know the deep love of their Father and grow into men and women of God who are instrumental in the transformation of Haiti.

Saturday – Sunday Worship

Pray Acts 2.29-47

Pray that God would be honored by our sincere, Gospel-centered worship. **Pray** the preaching of God's word would be powerful for believer and unbeliever alike. **Pray** that folks would come, and that the meeting would result in lives changed for the glory of God.

Jerry and Diane Schoenenberger welcomed their second grandchild, a boy, on September 27th. Ryan Jacob was 7 pounds, 12 ounces and 20 inches long. Congratulations to all and welcome, Ryan!



Progressive Dinner

contributed by Julia Bailey

It's that time of year again, ladies and gents: time for FOLF's social event of the season: the Progressive Dinner. The event will take place on Saturday, November 6, beginning at 5:30 PM

If you are new to FOLF, a progressive dinner is sort of a round-robin, four-course potluck. Each participating group (family, couple, buddies, traveling companions) serves one course at their home to a group of 6-10 people. Then you travel to other people's homes for the other courses. You eat each course with a different group of people. You don't know where you are going for each course (unless it's the one you are hosting) until you leave the previous course.

The evening is open to all FOLF families and friends.

Children are welcome if they will enjoy sitting at a four-course family style dinner (think an extended Thanksgiving dinner).

Can't drive or prefer not to? No problem! Let us know and we will pair you with someone who drives.

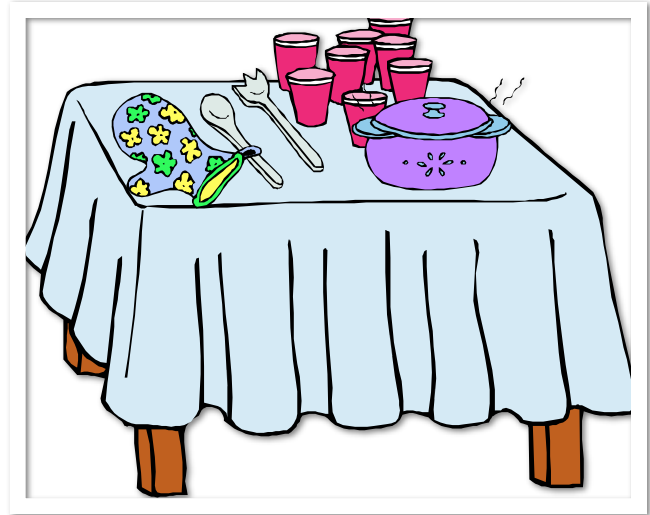
Single and don't want to go by yourself? No problem! Let us know and we will help you find someone to travel with for the evening.

Your home won't accommodate that many people (too small, no parking, etc?) No problem! In this case you have two options: you can sign up for the dessert course: we all meet together at one location for dessert, so you don't have to host. Or you can partner with someone who has a larger home and host together.

This is intended to be a fun evening. No need to get fancy unless you want to. Paper plates are fine. You can choose which course you'd like to bring, or let us pick one for you!

Signups will begin October 3. You must sign up by Oct. 17 so that we have sufficient time to handle all the logistics.

If you have questions, contact Julia Bailey or Natasha Soria. We hope to see you there!





Birthdays

- 10.10** Jannie Myburgh
10.18 Lizzy Mirth
10.29 Vince Cabral

Anniversaries

- 10.3** Don & Diane Woodhead
10.16 Ron & Renate De Ruiter
10.19 James & Mira Davidson

Special Offering: November

On November 7th, we will take a Special Offering for the Benevolence Fund here at FOLF. This fund allows for us to assist the congregation when a situation arises that involves a serious financial need. If you have any questions about this fund, please see a member of council.

Care for our Shut-Ins

Below is a list of friends & family of FOLF that would appreciate a call, a card, a visit, and prayer.

Please contact Rachel (Rachel@folfcrc.com) for phone numbers and addresses of those we care for.

Joe Bakkelo has moved back into his home in Victorville. He would appreciate calls and cards.

Hetty De Jonge is still recovering. We give thanks to God for healing! Hetty still loves to have visitors and cards, and enjoys fresh flowers from your garden.

Russ Hanff is in an assisted living home in Whittier. Russ suffers from Alzheimer's; while forgetful, he really enjoys visits and cards (he has no phone). He LOVES to talk about the Angels, and his years of coaching Little League and softball. He recently was able to take a trip to Alaska.

June Verhoeven live at the Artesia Christian Home in Artesia. June cannot walk due to a stroke that she suffered a few months ago. She would love to receive cards and visits. She also enjoy home-cooked food and fresh fruit.

Rosalie would appreciate some visitors from the FOLF family. If you are interested in visiting or bringing a meal, please contact Irmgard for information.

Brian McGuire is a former member of our church. He lives in Fullerton with his son, Kyle. Brian suffers from advanced effects of diabetes. He would love a call or a card from FOLF friends.

Some Domestic Tips

At our last Daughters of the King meeting, the women of FOLF shared some household tips that are handy. Here are a few that were helpful!

1. To get pen out of clothing, spray hairspray on it.
2. Put dryer sheets in tennis shoes to freshen them.
3. Use coffee grinds and honey together for a good face mask.
4. Use mayonnaise, egg, and lemon juice, mix them and use as a hair deep conditioner.
5. Put a bowl of water, vinegar, and lemon in the microwave and heat- the steam will clean the vents.
6. If you want your bars of soap to last longer, unwrap each individual bar and store them for a few months. They will harden and last longer like expensive soaps.
7. Use baby powder on your kitchen counter to deter ants from coming into your kitchen.
8. To clean your shower doors, spray them with cooking spray and wipe clean.
9. Use ski goggles to cut onions!
10. To keep drains clean, use 1/2c baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour it down the drain, then follow it 15 minutes later with boiling water.
11. To reheat deep dish pizza, place crust bottom down in a cast iron skillet for 5 minutes on medium to high heat- makes pizza less soggy.
12. Put a dryer sheet in a casserole dish that seems impossible to clean. Let it soak overnight and the next morning the dish will wash right out!

And there's more where that came from! See all the tips in the upcoming FOLF Cookbook!

Daughter's of the King: October 17th

We have started our new study called "Clinging to God's promises." Last month we studied what God says about his faithfulness in keeping his promises. We also discovered that, as a group, we have a wealth of knowledge of handy tips for around the house. We've been trying out those tips, and have found that they are pretty amazing. What a wealth of knowledge we possess together!

This month we will focus on God's promises for salvation. Come join us as we look through the Bible to discover what God has promised us! (You may want to bring your own Bible if you enjoy marking things as you study.)

Daughters of the King is a fellowship of women from 18 to 102+ who meet to study God's word, play together and learn about each other. Visitors are always welcome! Feel free to bring a friend.

Andrizomai: October 9th

Our next breakfast is October 9th, 7 a.m. at Carrows (Magnolia, between Heil and Warner). Join us as we enjoy one another's company and continue our study in the Gospel according to Mark. We'll be giving our attention to Mark 6.1-29.

Trunk or Treat

contributed by Matt Ford

David Helm, a pastor friend of mine, once shared this phrase: “Good Works/ Good Will/ Good News.” The idea is that the church, full of the love of Christ, does good works of service for the community. This, God-willing, can lead to good will in the community towards church. And this good will hopefully enables an open door through which the Good News of Jesus Christ can pass from one to another.

We have a great opportunity for some simple “good works” this October 31st. Halloween lands on a Sunday this fall, and with a massive population out walking the streets that evening, what a fabulous time to serve them and show ourselves good neighbors. In this spirit, we are planning a Trunk or Treat here at church this Halloween. Plans are still in the works, but we are hoping for volunteers for the following:

- ✓ Bring your car, decorate the trunk, and fill it with candy to give away.
- ✓ Look for and donate “fall”/“harvest” – type decorations (pumpkins, hay bales, corn stalks, etc.)
- ✓ Help to set-up/ decorate.
- ✓ Help break-down/ clean.
- ✓ Run activities for the kids (ideas include face painting, bounce house, bobbing for apples, etc.)
- ✓ Cook, give out hot dogs and drinks.

If you’re interested in being part of this exciting outreach, please speak with Genesee Atkins. And pray that God would take this very simple good deed, turn it to good will, and open doors for us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.



Budget Report

contributed by Julia Bailey

Inflow:

General Fund (offerings, rent): \$13,285.50

Special offering:

- Scott's education fund - \$368.00
- Haiti Orphans Fund - \$200.00

Outflow:

General Fund/Ministry Shares: \$15,447.07

Ministry Schedule	Oct 10, 2010	Oct 17, 2010	Oct 24, 2010	Oct 31, 2010
Nursery	Laura Kathryn Dorothy	Heather L. Tracey Michael	Melinda Carolyn Lizzy	Natasha Julie Audrey
Children's Worship	Debbie B. John B.	Debbie B. Genesee	Debbie B. Judy S.	Jacky S. TBD
Hospitality	John & Irene			
Congregational Prayer	TBD	Ed	Todd	Vera
Scripture Reading	TBD	Cinti	Ed	Scott
Sanctuary Care	Rachel	Scott	Cinti	Mira