

Fountain of Life Fellowship

Monthly Newsletter

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 Jerry Schoenenberger
 Don Woodhead
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January 2011

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

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Pastor's Note by Matt Ford

Facing the Enemy Head-On

Last Wednesday evening I had one of the saddest experiences of my life. I helped a grandma tell her nine-year-old grand-daughter that her mother (the grandma's daughter) was dead. What can you do but weep?

I'm a chaplain with the Fountain Valley Police department, and a few times a year I get called to come help in crisis situations. I count it an honor to be with people in moments like these. Often the interactions are short. Some people don't even want me there, and that's ok. But whether or not I'm able to make a difference, there's something I hear echoing in those moments that the situation rarely allows me to deal with...it's all the haunting questions that come with suffering.

Consider my last three interactions as a chaplain – a 14 year-old boy getting smashed dead by truck, a double-homicide/ suicide where a man killed his wife and child before doing himself, and then this mother dying unexpectedly leaving a 9 year-old girl alone. And that, quite honestly, is nothing compared to the suffering in the world at large. Can you feel the questions that rise? Especially when my great desire is to have these dear people resting in Jesus Christ as they suffer.

Our Life Together Groups for the rest of the year will have us studying D. A. Carson's book, *How Long O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*. Carson is one of my favorite authors – wise, careful, scholarly, and pastoral – and I think he handles this subject particularly well.

I want to invite you to either 1) join a group if you haven't yet or 2) commit again to your previous group.¹

Let's dive into this subject together and face the issue head-on. I'd like to give you a few motivators to study suffering with us:

1) There's nothing more common than suffering.

Some suffer more, some suffer less, no doubt. But everyone suffers. As they say, "If you're not suffering now, just wait longer." And everyone knows someone who is suffering, and everyone lives in a world full of suffering. We need to have a grip on this issue according to the Word of God.

2) Many of us are suffering now, and we need to hear God in the midst of it.

This book will help us to see God, His truth regarding suffering and His love in the midst of suffering. He is the only hope in suffering, and we need to grow in knowing what it means to cling to Him in the midst of it. Let's engage in this together, and hold one another up in the Lord.

3) We need to serve others in their suffering.

Without doubt, when someone first encounters big suffering, often the best thing to do is simply to be there, hug them, cry with them, and get some tissues. But at some point questions come. To love someone at that point means to have thoughtful, compassionate, realistic, biblical answers to provide. The study of this book will help us with that.

4) We need to be able to argue for the Christian faith in the midst of suffering.

True love for the Christian will, at some point, involve sharing the Gospel with those who do not know it. And that discussion will often lead to a discussion on suffering. Part of giving a good answer for our hope in Christ is being able to deal with this issue in a winsome, thoughtful way. Studying this book will help us with our evangelism.

One thing to love about our amazing Lord Jesus is that, more than anyone, He knows – experientially – about suffering. And He cares deeply for those who are suffering. And He has the truth about suffering.

Let's follow Him there together.

Pastor Matt

¹ If scheduling or some other need would have you moving to a different group, that is more than fine.

Ignition Update

contributed by Scott Clair

This last month we finished Matthew 5 in our series on the Sermon on the Mount. This series has been very relevant and challenging to us as we consider what it means to be part of the Kingdom of God. Clinging loosely to our self-conceived rights, loving and praying for our enemies, and a standard of holiness that judges our actions and our hearts are all the characteristics of those who belong to the kingdom of God. Jesus summed it up best when he said, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father in Heaven is perfect." As we have studied Matthew 5 we have quickly realized how impossible it is to meet God's holy perfect standard. However, we have not lost hope because we have a perfect King in Jesus Christ, who not only met God's perfect standard, but also died on a cross for his people. In him we can now enter into the Kingdom of God and are able to live the life in which Jesus called us to. Happy New Year everyone!

2:42 Update

contributed by Scott Clair

We finished out 2010 by having a Christmas celebration at the Mirth's house. This night was filled with games, great food, and remembering how much God has done for us this last year. We are extremely thankful to the Mirth's for opening up their house and for cooking some delicious food. As we head into 2011 we are excited to see what God is going to do in our group. Some of the things we look forward to in the upcoming year are finishing up our series in the book of John, growing in our sanctification, and continuing to grow closer in our relationships with one another.

Shepherd's Corner

contributed by Matt Ford

The elders met Friday morning, December 31st from 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. The meeting included a study of 1 Thessalonians 2, encouragement and constructive criticism for one another, preaching planning, member needs, and prayer.

LTG Kick-Off

Join us on Thursday, January 13th at 6:30pm for our Winter LTG Kick-Off. This service will be focused on praise to God in singing and prayer together for the New Year. Everyone is welcome!

Out of the Salt Shaker

contributed by Julia Bailey

Hidden Truth

I was talking with a friend over dinner a few nights ago. We had both seen an interview with a scientist who is working on assembling the DNA of the dinosaur. The interviewer had asked if the scientist believed in God; the scientist replied that he did not.

My friend dismissed the scientist as a fool. I wondered aloud how one could understand the complex intricacies of re-creating dinosaur DNA and not wonder about the source of the original creation, or reject the idea that it could have been developed from nothing.

As I reflected on the conversation the following day, I realized that the Bible explains the reason for this: Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them. (Is 6:10 as quoted by Jesus in John 12:40)"

In II Corinthians, Paul says that "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor. 4:4)

Even men who knew Jesus, walking on the road to Emmaus after Jesus' resurrection, did not recognize Him until, the Bible says, "their eyes were opened".

The marvel is not that the wise do not see the truth of Jesus, but that we do. The marvel is that God has opened our eyes to the truth of His word.

As we leave the Christmas season, may we not leave the marvel: that the Creator came to earth as a creature; that the Almighty Judge allowed himself to be judged and sentenced in a corrupt trial; that the Lord of Life suffered death, and that the Great Physician healed our blindness so that we may see.

May that marvel infuse our lives with light. May we humbly seek healing for those whose eyes are still blinded. And may we have compassion rather than judgment for those still living in the darkness.

Thank You!

contributed by Matt Ford

Special thanks to **Genesee Atkins** for her thoughtful, compassionate work in organizing the Angel Tree Christmas party.

Thanks to **Marcia Ford, Julia** and **Eleanor Bailey**, and **Lelani Myburgh** for their hard work in prepping for the Christmas Eve Service. It was a wonderful time.

And thanks to **Cinti** and **John Andersen** and **Janni Myburgh** for their hard work on "that door." They know what I mean.

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 singles in our community; pray that they would feel connected, loved and part of the church family. Pray that single parents would be filled with God's power and feel our support. 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. Pray that the unsaved would be a burden in our hearts, and that we would be filled with the Holy Spirit and power towards witnessing for Christ. Pray that younger singles would continue to find a place in our community and become more and more a part of the ministry here.

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.

What type of "God" is Jesus? Sharing With Jehovah's Witnesses

contributed by John Peters

(Originally published in the journal "Reformed Perspective", November 2010)

One of my professors used to quip that it's ironic that Jehovah's Witnesses would come to our front door on Saturday morning and hand us a pamphlet called, *Awake!* So much for sleeping in, right? Instead of being bothered by our friends taking the time to visit and talk, though, we can see this as a great opportunity to care for their spiritual well-being.

Just what do Jehovah's Witnesses believe about Jesus? Well, they deny the Trinity, and say "the Father is Jehovah" but don't believe that Jesus shares the essence or nature of God with the Father. And so, they're not willing to say that Jesus is God Almighty or Jehovah God. When they come to our door, then, we can engage them about Jesus' true identity from Scripture, and bring clarity and light about who Jesus is and what He offers!

Although many Bible passages show who Jesus is, Hebrews 1 is my favorite passage from which to share Jesus' true identity as Jehovah. This marvelous passage begs us to ask and then answers the question, "Just what type of a 'God' is Jesus?"

Hebrews 1 clearly says that Jesus is God. The author of Hebrews wrote, "But of the Son He says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, / And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom'" (Heb. 1:8). The word "Son" tells us that Jesus is in view here. And, the word "God" leads everyone who claims to believe these words to say that Jesus must be God in some sense. Although our Jehovah's Witness friends will be willing to say that "Jesus is 'a god,'" the passage demands much more.

Hebrews 1 says that Jesus is the type of "God" who is the Creator. The author of Hebrews wrote, "And, 'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, / And the heavens are the works of Your hands'" (Heb. 1:10). Here, Jesus is said to have been around "in the beginning," or before anything else existed--He's eternal. Not only was He present at creation, but He's said to have been active in creating the very "foundation of the earth" and even "the heavens," leaving no doubt that He possesses the creative power of God.

Hebrews 1 teaches that Jesus is the type of "God" who is Jehovah. Hebrews 1:10 comes from Psalm 102:25, where the Psalmist wrote, "Of old You founded the earth, / And the heavens are the work of Your hands." Just what type of a 'God' is Jesus, then? Well, Psalm 102:1, the first verse of this chapter, answers this question. It says, "Hear my prayer, O LORD!" And, when "LORD" is used in the NASB in all capital letters, the original Hebrew word is "YHWH," or, you guessed it, what is translated as "Jehovah"!

So, according to Hebrews 1, Jesus is God, Creator, and Jehovah. Everyone who believes in the Bible's authority and can understand this simple argument should bow before Jesus Christ as God Almighty.

And so, when your Jehovah's Witness friends come to your house and hand you their pamphlet, *Awake!*, wake up to the challenge! Tell them that Jesus is the Creator, the true God who created the world out of nothing. "Jesus is Jehovah," and as the God-man, represented both God the Father and sinful humanity as He received punishment for our sins and bore our shame. He rose again from the dead, and He brings us, flawed sinners, into His Father's forgiving hands. After sharing these truths about Jesus with our friends, ask them, "Do you see Jesus, the God-man, offering you forgiveness for all of your sins? Do you know that He's able to take away your guilt and shame?" Pray that God would make their souls alive as you lovingly and confidently tell them about Jesus Christ!

Happy New Year!

contributed by Matt Ford

I strongly encourage you to consider these, answer them, and maybe share it with a friend and/or your spouse.

"Ten Questions to Ask...", by Don Whitney www.biblicalspirituality.org/newyear.html

Once, when the people of God had become careless in their relationship with Him, the Lord rebuked them through the prophet Haggai. "Consider your ways!" (Haggai 1:5) he declared, urging them to reflect on some of the things happening to them, and to evaluate their slipshod spirituality in light of what God had told them.

Even those most faithful to God occasionally need to pause and think about the direction of their lives. It's so easy to bump along from one busy week to another without ever stopping to ponder where we're going and where we should be going.

The beginning of a new year is an ideal time to stop, look up, and get our bearings. To that end, here are some questions to ask prayerfully in the presence of God.

1. What's one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?
2. What's the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do this year?
3. What's the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life this year?
4. In which spiritual discipline do you most want to make progress this year, and what will you do about it?
5. What is the single biggest time-waster in your life, and what will you do about it this year?
6. What is the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?
7. For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?
8. What's the most important way you will, by God's grace, try to make this year different from last year?
9. What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?
10. What single thing that you plan to do this year will matter most in ten years? In eternity?

Budget Report

contributed by Anne Buteyn

Newsletter Budget Report – December 2010

Inflow:

General Fund (offerings, rent): \$16,537.00

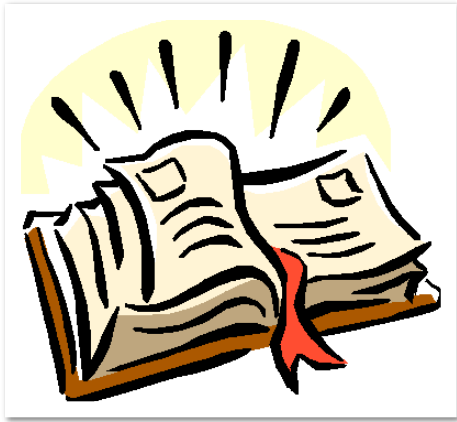
Special offering:

– Prison Ministry - \$289.00

Outflow:

General Fund/Ministry Shares: \$13,319.9

Ministry Schedule	Jan 9, 2011	Jan 16, 2011	Jan 23, 2011	Jan 30, 2011	Feb 6, 2011
Nursery	Heather L Tracey Michael	Melinda Carolyn Lizzy	Kathryn Gayle Audrey	Dorothy Julie Q Niel	Tracey Sally Samantha
Children's Worship	Cinti Judy	Cinti Ann S	Cinti Jacky	Cinti Frances	Debbie John B.
Hospitality	John & Irene				Julie & Gayle
Scripture Reading	Wesley	Lynn	Julie Q	Ed	Scott
Congregational Prayer	Ed	Todd	Vera	Ed	Heather L
Greeters	Janna & Irmgard				Jacky & Ann B
Communion Elements	Vince				Lynn



WOW, our ladies' bible study, will begin anew on Wednesday morning, January 13th at 9 a.m. We're tackling the magisterial Gospel of John. Come enjoy this amazing book with us, and bring a friend! Every and any lady is welcome!

We will meet on January 16th at our regularly scheduled time of 5 PM. We will continue our study of the promises of God, and will look at the promises of God to those who do good. We also will have our regular game time, singing, and an interview with one of our members.

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 as we kick off another year!

Our next breakfast is Saturday, January 8th, 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 6.30-44. Bring a friend!

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,, 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