

The FBC Family

CONNECTION

February 2010



Notes from the Pastor

On Tuesday, January 12 at 4.53 p.m., the country of Haiti suffered a massive earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale. Christian commentator Al Mohler wrote on his website, *"The images streaming in from Haiti look like scenes from Dante's Inferno. In truth, it is hard not to describe the earthquake as a disaster of biblical proportions...the Western Hemisphere's most impoverished nation has experienced a catastrophe that appears almost apocalyptic."* USA Today reported that 100,000 people are feared dead and hundreds of thousands more are unaccounted for; and if ever an accurate assessment could be taken, the death toll may be as high as 1/2 million people, with many Americans included in that number. The quake is being described as shocking, unimaginable, and catastrophic; a devastation of the worse kind.

Haiti's total population is 9 million; and the area hit the hardest was the town of Port au Prince, with a population of 2-3 million. I've visited the area with Grace Mission to Haiti, and the scenes and smells on a normal day are more deplorable than an American ghetto. It's hard to imagine that life in this third-world country could get any worse, but it has ... and both the rich and the poor are experiencing the calamity. The Presidential palace, Parliament and many other important structures have been destroyed, along with countless homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and shantytowns. And now, as the citizens, politicians, and pastors try to make sense of the magnitude of this tragedy, God's name is entering the conversation. But have you heard what is being said?

Haiti's religious history is a mixed bag of various faiths and practices. The nation is known for voodoo, sorcery, and a French Catholic tradition that has been greatly influenced by the occult. For decades, Christian missionaries have labored in the fields sowing gospel seeds among the weeds of syncretism and sorcery. While true believers are few in number, they are zealous, authentic and enthusiastic followers of Jesus Christ. After the quake, many Christians were seen in the villages, holding hands, singing hymns and praying for God to rescue the perishing. But will He? Or was this earthquake a sign that God is finished with Haiti?

When massive tragedies strike, like 9/11, the Indonesian Tsu-

nami, Hurricane Katrina, and the recent Haitian earthquake, what should our response be as Christians? Are all these disasters signs of God's judgment? Do we declare with Rev. Pat Robertson that God is *"angry with America,"* or is *"judging the nations,"* or *"hates Haiti for the pact it made with the devil hundreds of years ago."* Furthermore, can we explain why God flattened the poorest nation in the western hemisphere while apparently watching in silence the Nazi Holocaust, the killings in Cambodia, Apartheid, and other forms of social injustice and sin? And, BTW, why are Christian churches and believing families so often included in these "judgments of destruction?" Doesn't God know who is on His team?

Make no mistake. God is the judge of all the earth (Psa. 82:8). The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God is the source of well-being and He is also sovereign when calamity strikes (Isa. 45:7). The God of love is also the God who loathes sin and will judge and put an end to it in His time. Whenever calamity strikes, it should be a wake-up call to all men that God is no respecter of persons, for *"there is no partiality with God"* (Rom. 2:11). We're all sinners who deserve to die, but for the believer death is promotion to glory! The context of Romans 2 is one of judgment. The Lord will judge the earth (Psa. 98:9) and all the people who dwell therein. Since all men are under God's curse of death (Gen. 2:17), the fact that we live at all (never mind the average lifespan of 70 years) is an expression of God's mercy and grace as the result of God's atoning work through Jesus Christ. God's justice would require an immediate death (Rom 6:23). But, in God's mercy, we find life and peace because Jesus paid the price for man's sin by dying in our place. That's the gospel! If I embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior, I will live forever. If I don't, then I will die in my sin and suffer eternally in hell. *"And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"* (Heb. 9:27).

Too often we view and value life as something we deserve. But is it? The Bible tells us that life is a gift from God (Acts 17:28). However, this gift, from a loving heavenly Father, was ruined by the disobedience of one man named Adam (Rom. 5:12). His rebellion plunged the entire human race into

Continued on Page 3

Church Happenin's

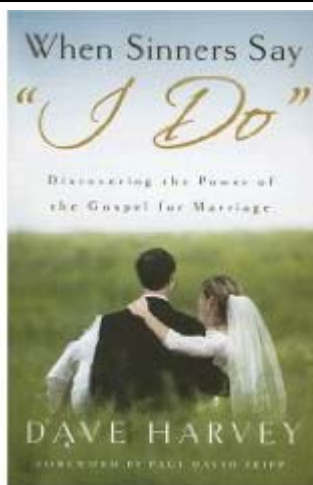
- Jan. 25 to Feb. 1 Pastor Bruce will be out of town
- Monday, Feb. 1 Council Meetings, 7 PM—If you would like to participate in the ministries at FBC, please join us. Elders & Deacons meet at 6:30.
- Wednesday, Feb. 3 Upward Bound Share-A-Dish, 11:30 AM at 1404 Dillon Rd.
- Sunday, Feb. 7 Super Bowl Party & Potluck, Kickoff is at 3 PM @ FBC.
- Sunday, Feb. 14 Valentine Dinner Fellowship, 6 PM in the FBC Fellowship Hall. Tickets are \$12.50 for adults. Free childcare available.
- Monday, Feb. 15 Church Office Closed.
Elder Meeting, 6:30 PM
- Saturday, Feb. 20 Men's Breakfast, 8 AM in the Fellowship Hall.



Book of the Month

By Dave Harvey

Marriage is the union of two people who arrive at the altar toting some surprisingly large luggage. Often it gets opened right there on the honeymoon, sometimes it waits for the week after. The Bible calls it sin and understanding its influence can make all the difference for a man and woman who are building a life together. When Sinners Say "I Do" is about encountering the life-transforming power of the gospel in the unpredictable journey of marriage.



"This is a wonderful book. It is honest, refreshing, practical, and above all biblical." - Randy Alcorn

BIRTHDAYS!

- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Tamera Sampson | February 1 |
| Jackie Frost | February 1 |
| Margaret Hazlett | February 3 |
| Jerry Bryan | February 5 |
| John Delepine | February 5 |
| Kristin Yates | February 5 |
| Debby Nichols | February 6 |
| Lorella Monroe | February 7 |
| Dee Dillon | February 8 |
| Chuck Weatherly | February 11 |
| Helen Coates | February 13 |
| Andrew Stenberg | February 13 |
| Hilde Borrmann | February 16 |
| Greg Sandercock | February 17 |
| Bob Severance | February 19 |
| Ron Holloway | February 24 |
| Judy Kirkwood | February 25 |
| Lee Nance | February 27 |
| Lora Weatherly | February 27 |
| Ranee Staska | February 29 |



** If your birthday doesn't appear on the list, that means we have no record of it. Please let Lora know in the Church Office, and we will add you to our lists.

Super Bowl Party & Potluck

Sunday, February 7th




Invite your friends and family to join us at 3 PM in the FBC Fellowship Hall for this time of fun and fellowship. Sign-ups in the Church foyer.

Bible Based Counseling

Pastor Bruce Parker and Joan Kulper offer biblically based counseling, free of charge, in the areas of: individual, family, marriage, and pre-marriage. If you have any questions, please contact the Church Office or Joan Kulper at (509) 493-3901.





Notes from the Pastor

Continued from Page 1

darkness and despair. To be honest, if God were to destroy the whole earth (and He will one day – 2 Pet. 3:10), He would be perfectly just in doing so because *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23). My sin deserves God’s wrath, not God’s blessing (Rom. 1:18); and the full fury of God’s anger toward sin will inevitably result in a global catastrophe that will make Haiti’s earthquake look like microscopic misery.

In Job 37, Elihu, one of Job’s friends, speaks to him: *“Out of the south comes the storm, and out of the north the cold. From the breath of God ice is made, and the expanse of the waters is frozen. Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He disperses the cloud of His lightning. It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, that it may do whatever He commands it on the face of the inhabited earth. Whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.”*

At the end of the book of Job, God rebukes three of Job’s friends for making inaccurate statements both about Job’s suffering and about God. Elihu, however, is not rebuked. Elihu spoke truthfully, saying to Job, in effect, “Look, you cannot take God out of this equation. You cannot say God is not in the storm. He is.” Throughout the Bible, but particularly in the book of Job, we are reminded that we simply do not have the option of saying that God is somehow not involved. If we say we believe in the sovereignty of God, we must believe that God is always and everywhere sovereign—even over the storm.

Consistent with the tragic loss of life in Haiti, the Lord responded to a calamity of lesser proportions in Luke 13:4. Jesus answered a question about the death of 18 people from an unfortunate accident in Siloam. *“Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?”* Are the people in Haiti worse “culprits” than we sinners who rebel against God throughout the world? Were the vacationers sunbathing on the beaches of Indonesia more wicked than those atheists who shake their fist at God that they deserved to be swallowed up by a tsunami? *“I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* Turning from sin and believing in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ is our only hope, because we who are citizens of this world ARE the people who are perishing.

To presume that man can know the specific reason(s) for why God allows calamity to strike on any particular day is arrogant. Because of sin that is in the world, Job declares, *“For man is born for trouble, as sparks fly upward”* (Job. 5:7). Death (individual or corporate) is a reminder of sin’s destruction, and that we are all going to face our Maker one day (Eccl. 7:1-4); and in a world where people are feverishly doing everything they can to avoid or deny the end result of life, and their face-to-face encounter with God on Judgment Day, the sudden destruction of lives makes death and judgment a reality once

more. Are you prepared to meet Jesus? Will He welcome you into heaven on the day you die? And when you meet Him what do you think you will hear Him say? *“Pardoned!”* or *“Depart from Me I never knew you.”*

Since death is inevitable for every man, and God is sovereign over one’s arrival and departure from earth, *“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord”* (Job 1:21), what is our role as preachers and teachers of truth? Can we claim to know the mind of God and His purpose for these natural disasters, or do we rest in His sovereign will, come alongside the afflicted, and seek to rebuild and reconcile the peoples of the land? The apostle Paul answers our question. *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”*

Nehemiah was faced with similar circumstances. Because of Israel’s rebellion against God, the Lord allowed adversarial nations to attack Israel and plunder the nation. The walls of Jerusalem had been ravished by the Babylonian armies. The city lay in ruin and the people in exile. While the prophets had repeatedly warned about God’s wrath to come, the people did not heed God’s warnings. They were stiff-necked and hard-hearted and committed abominations of every kind. So, God used Israel’s enemies to “wake-up” His people from their spiritual stupor. And the walls of Jerusalem “came tumbling down.”

Nehemiah’s task was to rebuild the walls and the gates of the city of Jerusalem. This man of God was given the mission of helping to restore what God had taken down. Sometimes God destroys the old so that what is new may be established (2 Cor. 5:17). God’s people are planters and builders (1 Cor. 3:6-15). We are co-laborers with Christ in the building of His church. Through the gospel of Jesus Christ we bring a message of hope that Jesus Christ is the “way, truth and life.” In a world where people are pursuing everything else but a relationship with the living Lord, the gospel needs to be heard, heeded, and obeyed. Salvation is what is needed most, and trials and troubles often provide the platform for delivering God’s message that Jesus saves! Haiti’s humiliation may very well be Christ’s exaltation in a nation that has frequently ignored the Lord.

Let us not join the voices of “doom and gloom.” The Haitian earthquake is an opportunity for believers to shine the gospel of Jesus Christ into the faces of those who live in darkness. I pray that we are faithful to bring the hope of eternal life to people whose world is now marred by much death and destruction. Jesus is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first . . . *and also to the Haitian.*

While lots of humanitarian aid will be pouring into the country

Continued on Page 5



Spotlight on Missions



By Marian Warrenka



Rod & Jackie Allen

*Medical & Seminary work
in Salta, Argentina*

Rod and Jackie Allen will end their furlough in March and be returning to Argentina. Their children will remain in Oregon to attend college. Please pray that Chelsea, Nigel, and Colin will find part-time jobs. Nigel is also in need of housing.

Rod has been working with several churches in the States to send short-term teams to Argentina over the next four years. He is also looking for some "lumber-jacks" to cut down some diseased pine trees on the mission property.

Please pray for their finances, as they are \$781 a month short on their support.

Ellie & Lila Quezada

*Working in Bible translation and
lay training in Oaxaca, Mexico*

Praise God! God has supplied the Quezadas with a new car, a 2005 Ford explorer in wonderful condition and with low mileage. Ellie's old car was trapped in a mountain village last year after the roads were washed out. Ellie works with native people to translate and make audio recordings of the Bible in the various native dialects of Mexico.

Lila is presently studying to become a midwife. Praise God, she has passed her first exam. There are six more over a 2-year period that she must pass to become licensed. Lila is also working with Heather Judson to start a Christian Birth Center in Oaxaca. Please pray for provision for this Birth center. It will cost \$13,000 to \$20,000 to launch. The first year monthly operating cost will be \$2,500. In time, the center will become self-supporting. If you would like to invest in the Birth Center, please send your gift to Heritage Bible Church (30601 NE 172nd Ave, Yacolt, WA 98675). If you would like to give toward the cost of Lila's midwife schooling, please send funds to Missionary Ventures (P.O. Box 593550, Orlando, FL 32859).

Haiti Update

The CB missionaries serving in Haiti are safe. Two experienced physical injuries, but will recover. Our missionaries from Child Evangelism are also safe.

Paul & Becky Geary

*Serving at Bethesda Mission
Hospital in Borneo, Indonesia*

The Gearys' son, Matthew, has been in boarding school in Indonesia. In January 2010 he will be going back to Minnesota to finish high school.

Becky continues to home-school Karl and 3 other missionary kids. Paul and Becky will return to Minnesota in May for their son Peter's college graduation.

Praises: Paul's broken ankle is healed; The medical container arrived and was duty free; They now have new X-ray equipment, which is already in use; Paul received a 5-year VISA; An eye program is being developed for the villages; New office staff has been hired.



Nadine House

Training with Child Evangelism Fellowship

Nadine House will be home from New York City in May for the summer to raise support for her upcoming trip to Taiwan. She is currently only 51% supported.

Dominican Republic Short-Term Mission Team

Departure: May 14th through 24th

The team will be serving a Dominican dinner to the church family on March 7th. Please come and join us and learn more about the Dominican Republic ministry and partake of their food. Please bring in your full "banks"!

Please pray for the team's preparation, organization, planning, unity, finances, and good health. Please also pray for the Dominican people, that they may be open to the gospel. Please pray for Jim Strickling as he will be ministering with a team there in February.

FIDELIS**NOTES**

By Doris Kahler

Fidelis Missionary/Pastoral Supply is a designated fund in our Church budget, totally dependent on free-will offerings. Our group makes items requested by mission hospitals and our local nursing homes, and collects various items needed by missionaries, Christian schools, and other Christian organizations. We also raise funds and collect items to assist with local area ministries such as the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC), Child Evangelism, and Columbia Gorge Young Life.

We use:

- Lots of old, part-cotton sheets of any color or design for roller bandages and wipes for mission hospitals.
- New or good used baby clothing and blankets for the PRC and mission hospitals.
- Fabrics for making clothing protectors, wheelchair arm bags, neck pillows, therapy cubes, and walker bags for nursing homes.
- Health care items such as cotton balls or rolls, sterile and non-sterile exam gloves, 4"x4" gauze pads, and adhesive tape for mission hospitals.
- Cancelled stamps, which will be sent where they can be sold to collectors to raise funds for missions.
- Christian literature, such as daily devotionals, magazines (please no *Guide Posts*), biographies, books, teaching materials, Bibles and Concordance. These will be sent to Christian Resources International, which will distribute them to missionaries all over the world.
- Monetary Donations. (Please make any checks out to First Baptist Church, and mark any funds for Fidelis.)

Praise! We were able to make clothes protectors, walker bags, and comfort pillows for retirement homes from donated fabrics.

Thank you for your donations of old sheets. Our collection box for sheets and items from the list above is on the bottom shelf under the window in the church office.

Thank you for your faithful support! A year-end report about our work and expenditures is available upon request.

If you have any questions about our work, or would like to find out how you can help, please contact Doris Kahler at 541-386-5388.



Notes from the Pastor

Continued from Page 3

of Haiti in the weeks and months to come, we like Nehemiah are called by God to bring both physical and spiritual relief to people lost in sin. While the world can provide fresh water and bread, Jesus is the living water and the "bread of life" they need most. May the church of Jesus Christ pray, and then provide the resources that will enable us to preach the gospel to a people desperate to find answers in the midst of their despair.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations" (Isaiah 61:1-4).

As long as the gospel is still being proclaimed, there is hope for Haiti. May the true voice of Christ be heard through our love, mercy and grace to a people who desperately need the help of Jesus Christ.

Serving the Savior,

Pastor Bruce



Men's Breakfast

Saturday, Feb. 20, 8 AM
Meeting in the Fellowship Hall.

Men's Breakfast meets on the third Saturday of each month.

Upward Bound

Feb. 3rd

Share-A-Dish



Meeting at 11:30 AM at the home of Gary & Dee Dillon (1404 Dillon Rd.) Lunch begins at noon.

For more information on Senior Ministry activities, please contact Gary & Dee Dillon at 541-490-4602.

First Baptist Church

1889 Belmont Dr.
Hood River, OR 97031



Valentine Dinner Fellowship

Sunday, February 14, 6 PM
In the FBC Fellowship Hall

Tickets are \$12.50 per plate for adults.

Free childcare available for Nursery to 10 years. Older children and youth will be treated as adults and will need to purchase a ticket at the adult rate.

Adult dinner buffet choices include: salad, vegetables, potatoes & gravy, rice and desserts. Main dish selections will be Roast Beef or Baked Chicken.

Proceeds will go to benefit First Baptist's Dominican Republic Mission Trip and Tucker Road Baptist's Benevolence Fund. Please make checks payable to First Baptist Church with "Valentine Dinner" in the memo line.