

Ascending to Significance in Christ's Body

This past Sunday I preached on the topic "*Seizing the Opportunity*" as we looked at the parable of the minas in Luke 19. We had the following takeaways: 1. Great days and blessings await those who will be faithful to use their time, talent and treasures in the work of the Lord; 2. Regardless of personal giftedness, abilities and financial situation, every believer has the same opportunity to do business for the Lord with that which God has granted them; 3. We are not to be like the Jews who were waiting for the Lord to come and take over His rightful position of rule, while merely attending synagogue (church); 4. We are responsible to redeem the time with active ministry within the body of Christ and to the world; 5. Based on the fact that Jesus could return any day, we must be aware that we will all stand before the Lord either with confidence because we used what He granted us to accomplish His Kingdom work, or we will coward away from Him knowing that we will lose any chance of reward in the coming Kingdom and then the New Earth where the Lord will reign?

With these thoughts in mind, I am looking forward to the series on Philippians that will begin on Sunday, October 30. I will do most of the preaching in this series, but Greg Perkins and Mark Lazcay will also bring some of the messages as we move through this book in about three months. As I have been reading this book over and over, and teaching it at the Madera Rescue Mission for the past few months, the thrust of Paul's message of joy became very clear to me one night.

Paul, while being under house arrest in Rome, was writing to a church that he had founded and which was living under great duress from the Roman government. This church was a faithful church that was actively participating in the ministry of the Lord with Paul, even though many miles separated them. Paul celebrates their dedication to the Lord and to himself while giving them instruction on how a person could be viewed as significant in the body of Christ and overcome adverse circumstances. In some parts of the text, he applauds them for certain characteristics. In other areas of his letter he uses himself as an illustration of what it takes to be a growing, significant believer in the local church body. And, in some areas he sets forth teaching on the Lord's expectations of them. Putting this all together, it is obvious that Paul is rejoicing in the believers of this church who had caught the vision of what God wanted of them and were redeeming the time as the days were evil.

I am concerned that the church of the Lord is filled with "attenders" who are not of any significance when it comes to the building of the Lord's local body. They are just present. I see this more and more with so-called mature believers who should know better, but instead are fading into the background of church ministry in a time when they should be leading new believers in the work of Lord. When people are "attenders" only, unfortunately they do not leave a hole when they move on to another church and they do not add to the substance of another body where they now "attend." They are just a number filling a seat where their contribution to a local church body is nil.

In this series, we will all be challenged to ascend to significance in the local church body where God has planted us. Greg, Mark and I will be using a "*Pyramid of Significance*" as a visual aid to help us all grasp the fullness of Paul's message. We will add one new characteristic of significance each week to the pyramid until it is totally constructed. I pray that we will be able to identify these characteristics in our own lives. Where they are missing, may we be challenged to take the steps that make them a reality in our lives unto the glory of God and the good of the Lord's church.

To Jesus be all the praise in His followers and in His church, Pastor Randy Brannon

FROM THE STUDENT MINISTRIES PASTOR . . .

Last week (September 19-22nd) the church staff was at Hume Lake for a Pastor's retreat. One of the speakers was Sean McDowell (son of Josh McDowell). He talked about the importance of passing on an apologetic mindset to the next generation. His messages got me excited about our students being able to think apologetically.

Upon returning home I viewed a video on his website (www.seanmcdowell.org) called "*Atheist Role Play*." I encourage you to watch it and see how you would respond if you were in a conversation with an atheist. In the video, Sean switches back and forth between himself and role-playing an atheist to see how people in the audience can handle a conversation with someone with those beliefs. Let me tell you, you will be challenged!

I think as Christians we've settled far too long for "pat answers" to some difficult questions that just aren't going to cut it anymore. Better yet, we've really not had an answer at all! It's not that the solid answers aren't out there, we've just chosen not to do the work. People have tough questions and we need to be ready with solid Biblical and well thought out answers. We haven't practiced First Peter 3:15 very well.

FOR EXAMPLE: If God made the world, then who made God? How would you answer that? If you said, "*Well God has always existed,*" they could then say, "*Well if God has always existed, couldn't the universe have always existed?*" How would you respond then? The following are excerpts from an article – found in the apologetics section on Sean McDowell's site:

The big bang theory states that the entire universe came into existence a long time ago in the past. ...the universe is not eternal; ... it had a beginning just like Genesis states! ...to believe that something can come from nothing defies a commonsense principle: "Out of nothing, nothing comes." So, Who Made God? ...Christians do not believe everything that exists needs a cause. Rather, everything that begins to exist must have a cause. There are many things that exist that are uncaused ... Even if the world was not created it would still be true that 1+1=2. The universe had a beginning so it must have a cause. But God by definition does not need a cause, he is uncaused.

...asking the question "What caused God?" commits a ... categorical fallacy. Two examples of categorical fallacies are: "What does the color red taste like?" or "How much does love weigh?"... the categories of color and taste are distinct categories that do not overlap, as are love and weight. Similarly, to ask what caused God is to commit a category fallacy, for God is by definition uncaused.

[www.seanmcdowell.org/index.php/category/apologetics/]

After we go through the "How to Study the Bible" series as a church, I will be working through some of these difficult questions with students and teaching them how to respond in a loving but thought provoking way. 1 Peter 3:15



All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ~~We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors~~, as though God were making His appeal through us. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

October 2nd

9:00am Regular Sunday School
10:30am Rich Bartlett, The Gideon's International

October 9th

9:00am Regular Sunday School
10:30am Prosperly Lyngdoh, Missions & Evangelism
Professor at GGBTS

October 16th

9:00 Local Ministry Fair - learn how to be an
Ambassador for Christ here in Madera
10:30am Fermin Whittaker, Executive Director of CSBC

October 23rd

Evangelist Reid Saunders will share about his overseas ministry during the 9:00 Sunday School hour and will preach in the 10:30am worship service and at the evening banquet.

Banquet 5:30pm
Sunday, October 23rd

Buy your tickets on Sunday!
\$10 dinner tickets
\$5 for childcare up to 6th grade

What your Faith Promise Giving provided in 2011...

For overseas missionaries:

- Provided for living and ministry expenses for our partner missionaries:

Jim and Barbara Liljegren in Russia and Prague
Stepan and Vera Staucean in Moldova
Gil and Carol Harder in Kenya and Uganda

Tim and Beth Faul in Brazil
J is in Jerusalem
Hugo and Miriam Gomez in Guatemala
Vince and Gretta Payne in Panama
Tine and Jan Hardeman in the Philippines
Pavel and Klara Steiger in the Czech Republic

Dale and Jerusha Losch as they lead CrossWorld Mission Agency

- Special one-time gifts to: Carol Perkins' ministry in Africa, J and K as they prepare to move to Africa, Campus Crusade Missionary Alexander Pascan in Moldova, J as he prepares to move his family to Thailand, and Russ and Diane Dean as they continue to minister to street children in Brazil.
- Support for over 5,000 missionaries who serve all around the world through the IMB

For local missionaries:

- Food, beds and hope for the homeless at the Madera Rescue Mission
- Ron Giovanetti, of Youth For Christ, who works with teens in schools and Youth Detention Centers.
- Provide counseling, pregnancy tests, Bibles and the Gospel message through Doors of Hope
- Bibles passed out through the Gideon's and the Bible League
- Pastoral ministry within the Madera County Jail with Chaplain Jim Adair

Opportunities for you to be an Ambassador for Christ in 2012

China: June 3-18

We will help our missionaries, Wilson and Tanya, reach out to those in their community . . .
Ministry: Character Education with children at school through skits and songs, Encouraging and teaching the local Body of Christ. Approximate cost \$2200

Czech Republic: July 4-17

We will work alongside our missionary, Jim Liljegren, to help the Slavic Baptist Church and new church planters minister to the lost.

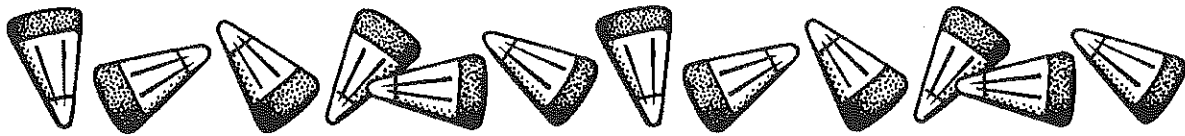
Ministry: Building relationships with unchurched Russian speaking people and sharing about Christ Approximate cost \$3400

New Mexico: July 20-28

We will work alongside House of Prayer (a Navajo Church).

Ministry: Teaching God's Word, Leadership training, light construction and VBS
Approximate cost \$450 adult/youth, \$200 children

If you are interested in finding out more information on any of these mission opportunities please contact Mark Laaze.



AWANA
October 2011
Wednesdays 6:30—8:00

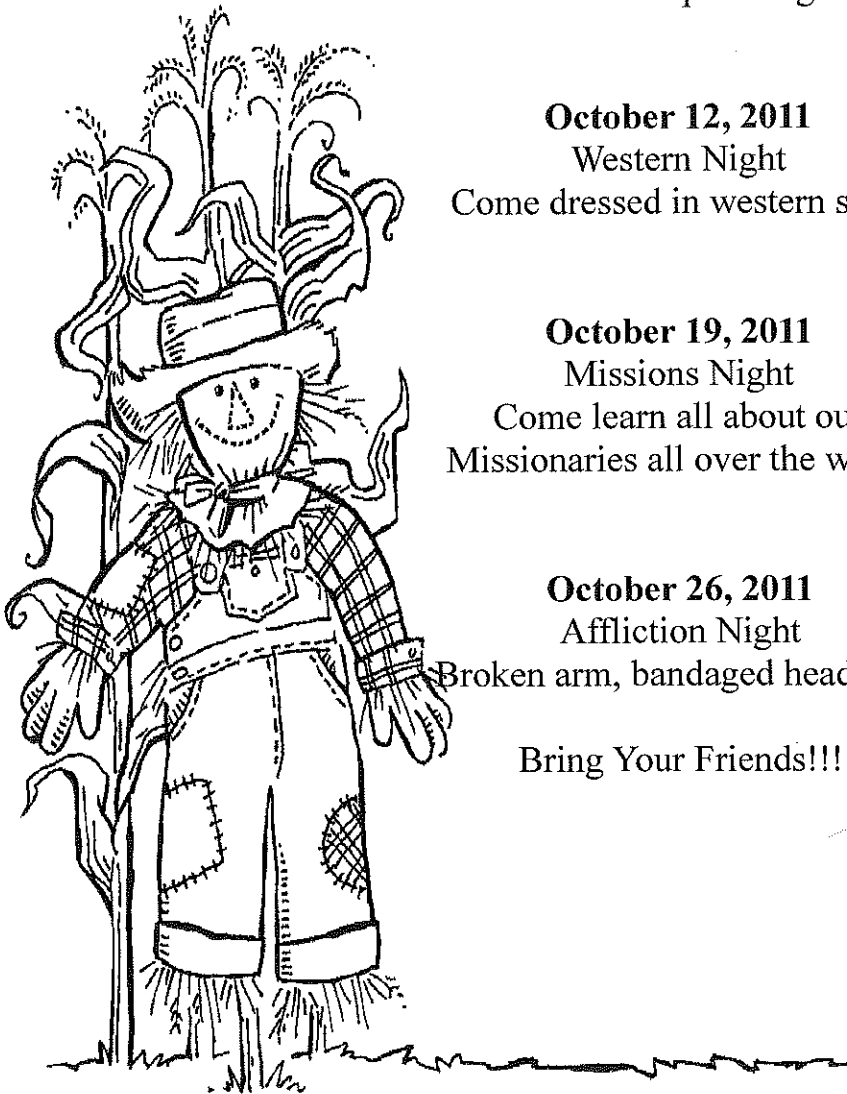
October 5, 2011
Pick a Pumpkin Night

October 12, 2011
Western Night
Come dressed in western style

October 19, 2011
Missions Night
Come learn all about our
Missionaries all over the world

October 26, 2011
Affliction Night
Broken arm, bandaged head, etc.

Bring Your Friends!!!





October

2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Annual Missions Conference 10/2 to 10/23</i>						1
2 <i>Missions Conference</i> Rich Bartlett Speaking <i>From the Gideons</i> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	3	4 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm 18735 Shell	5 <i>Every Wednesday:</i> <i>Men's Study</i> At Chubbies 6:30 am *****	6 Ladies Bible Study 9:00 am Room 7 ***** Hispanic Ministry 7:00	7	8
9 <i>Missions Conference</i> Properly Lyngdon <i>From GGBTS Speaking</i> 9:00 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	10 COLUMBUS DAY	11 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm 18735 Shell	12 <i>"All for the Family Night"</i> 5:30 pm <i>Meal</i> * 6:30 pm <i>To</i> 8:00 pm <i>AWANA</i> * <i>Pursuit</i> * <i>Ladies Bible Study</i> * <i>Men's Bible Study</i> * <i>Child Care Provided</i>	13 Ladies Bible Study 9:00 am Room 7 ***** Hispanic Ministry 7:00	14 Crossroad Christian School Car/Fall Festival	15
16 <i>Missions Conference</i> Fermin Whittaker <i>From CSBS Speaking</i> 9:00 am Local Missions Fair 10:30 am Worship	17	18 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm 18735 Shell	19	20 Ladies Bible Study 9:00 am Room 7 ***** Hispanic Ministry 7:00	21	22
23 <i>Missions Conference</i> Reid Saunders, Evangelist Speaking 9:00 am Bible Classes 10:30 am Worship 5:30 pm Missions Banquet	24	25 Ladies Bible Study 6:30 pm 18735 Shell	26	27 Ladies Bible Study 9:00 am Room 7 ***** Hispanic Ministry 7:00	28	30 Fellowship Night Location TBA
<i>Sunday 10/30 at 5:00 pm—Gospel Sing with Wayne Boren</i>						