

**Church Essentials**  
***Faith Commitments of a Healthy Church***

**Introduction:**

Clovis Evangelical Free Church (CEFC) is a body of believers, surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and committed to the *Great Commandment* (Matthew 22:37-39) and the *Great Commission* (Matthew 28:18-20). As such, we exist to glorify God by loving Him unreservedly, loving others sacrificially and making disciples purposefully. Our philosophy of ministry reflects the outworking of this vision and purpose.

The ministry of CEFC will be biblically based and biblically driven. While evangelical churches have historically acknowledged the principle of *Sola Scriptura*, our church is committed to the centrality and absolute authority of the Scriptures. Consistent with the roots of the Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA), our guideline for all faith and practice will be "Where stands it written?" We believe that God has spoken clearly and has given us, in the Bible, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, everything the Church needs for its instruction, nurture and life (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Therefore, what we teach, how we evangelize, how we organize, everything that makes up the corporate life of our church and the personal lives of our members will be evaluated by the one true and ultimate standard, the Word of God, rightly interpreted (2 Timothy 2:15). We will not be driven by cultural fads, personal preferences, marketing techniques or pragmatism. It is not our ambition to build a large human organization, but instead to faithfully work together to build the kingdom of God. As a church, we will seek to understand God's direction for us as outlined in His Word and as revealed to us through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, faithfully interpreted by our pastors and elders, as they are held accountable to the collective will of the congregation.

The pastors and elders of CEFC are fully united and committed to the following biblical principles that will drive and direct our ministry into the future. They have been drafted so as to clearly define our position. We have occasionally chosen to use language that sets forth both what we affirm as a church and what we deny. Our intent was not to be critical or judgmental but rather, to be unambiguous as we set forth our values and beliefs.

## Principles

1. **Expositional Preaching:** Expositional preaching is not marked by a particular style or form, but by biblical content, taking the point of the passage and making it the point of the message. This is preaching which expounds what Scripture says in a particular passage, carefully explaining its meaning and applying it to the congregation (Nehemiah 8:8). It is a commitment to hearing *God's Word* and to affirming the centrality of it in our worship. Through such preaching, we seek to hear not from a man, but from *God*, and thus have the agenda of our church shaped by *God's agenda* as outlined in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 4:2-5).
2. **Biblical Theology:** The apostle Paul charged Titus to "teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). Our focus should not only be on the method of the teaching, but on the content of the teaching as well. Biblical theology is a commitment to know the *God of the Bible* as He has revealed Himself in Scripture. The main theological lines of Scripture's story are clear, and we are called by *God* to learn, teach, and apply the "whole counsel of *God*" in our church (Acts 20:27).
3. **Biblical Understanding of Prayer:** Prayer is an offering up of our desires to *God* for things agreeable to His will, in the name of *Christ* with confession of our sins (Psalm 66:18-19), and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies (1 John 5:14). It is a means to praise and adore *God*, to know Him, to come into His presence, not to manipulate Him, but to seek His will and to be changed by Him. As we pray without ceasing, we will find that the very process is bringing about that which we are asking for: to have our hard hearts melted, to tear down barriers, to have the glory of *God* break through and His kingdom established (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 6:9-13).
4. **Biblical Understanding of the Gospel:** The gospel is the heart of Christianity. The gospel is not that *God* wants to meet people's felt needs or help them develop a healthier self-image. The gospel is that, in spite of our sinful rebellion against our Creator and Judge, *God* has graciously sent His Son to die the death we deserved for our sin. Further, He has credited *Christ's* righteousness to those who repent of their sins and believe in *Jesus' death* and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 3:21-26). Also, the gospel is not just something we need to hear and believe once in order to be saved. The gospel is *God*, the good news of His kingdom and the transforming power of His indwelling Spirit. We need to constantly preach the gospel to ourselves and to allow its power to conform us to the likeness of *Christ* (Romans 8:29).
5. **Biblical Understanding of Conversion:** The spiritual change each person needs is so radical, so near the root of us, that only *God* can accomplish it (John 1:12; 3:5-8). We need *God* to convert us. Conversion need not be an emotionally heated experience, but it will result in conviction (Acts 2:37) and must evidence itself in godly fruit if it is to be what the Bible regards as a true conversion (Matthew 7:21; 2 Peter 1:3). It is the

truth of the Bible that must change the hearts of unbelievers by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5; Acts 16:14). There is no saving knowledge of God except through the truth of Scripture, as trust is placed in Christ by its teaching and as the Holy Spirit imparts to us the desire to trust Christ in this way (Romans 10:17).

6. **Biblical Understanding of Evangelism:** How someone shares the gospel is closely related to how one understands the gospel. To present the gospel as an additive that gives non-Christians something they naturally want, such as joy or peace, is to present a half-truth, which elicits false conversions. The whole truth is that our deepest need is spiritual life, and that new life only comes by repenting of our sins and believing in Jesus (2 Corinthians 7:10). We present the gospel openly, passionately and unashamedly, with a deep desire to reach the lost, as we provide the reason for the hope that is in us (Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 3:15). We will not manipulate people or pronounce false assurance as we proclaim the gospel. Instead, we will faithfully declare the good news and leave the converting to God (2 Timothy 2:24-26).
7. **Biblical Understanding of Membership:** A biblical view of church membership means that our body will be made up of believers who have explicitly given testimony of their faith and submission to the Lordship of Christ and who show evidence of personal conversion. Membership should reflect a living commitment to a local church through regular attendance, giving, prayer and service, taking seriously the covenant commitment we make to one another when we join together as a local body of believers (Romans 12:4-8). We are purposefully traveling together as fellow citizens and members of God's household as we head toward our heavenly home. (Ephesians 2:19-22).
8. **Biblical Understanding of Fellowship:** Biblical fellowship is a relationship of inner unity among believers that expresses itself in outer co-participation with Christ and one another in accomplishing God's will on earth. It consists not only of being together but also working together to accomplish God's will and to further His kingdom (Philippians 1:27). Through true biblical fellowship (1 John 1:7), we learn to love and serve one another and, as a result, display the glory of God as disciples of Jesus Christ (1 John 4:7-8; John 17:20-23; Acts 2:42-47). Further, as fellow members of the body of Christ, we have covenanted with one another, not only to support our local church, but also to support and encourage one another so that even in times of disagreement and conflict, we are guided by the gospel in a ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:16-19).
9. **Biblical Understanding of Discipline:** The primary goal of biblical church discipline is to maintain a healthy body by restoring wayward believers to a proper relationship with God and with the congregation. Church discipline establishes parameters for church membership (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Corinthians 2:5-8). Each local church has a biblical

responsibility to judge the life and teaching of its leaders, and even of its members, particularly insofar as either could compromise the church's witness to the gospel. Through God's grace and the presence of the Holy Spirit, we have been taught and empowered to live upright and godly lives (Galatians 5:24-26; Titus 2:11-14). Failure to exercise restorative church discipline may result in the loss of health and purity within the body and may damage the testimony of the church in the community. Faithful exercise of such discipline will enhance the Church's glory and Christ's reputation (Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1).

10. **Biblical Understanding of Christian Discipleship and Growth:** Our church will be focused on faithfulness and on depth rather than breadth. Increased attendance alone is not a definite sign that God is growing a church. The only certain observable sign of growth is a life of increasing holiness, rooted in the denial of self (Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Peter 3:18). True discipleship builds the Church and promotes a clear witness to the world. To that end, we are committed to seeing people brought to new life in Jesus Christ, growing them to maturity, discovering their giftedness and providing them opportunities for service and ministry (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:12-16). A key component of discipling must take place through the family as parents assume the primary responsibility for bringing their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord, as supported and equipped by our covenant community (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:1-4; Psalm 78:1-7; see also our position paper entitled "The Family and the Church").
11. **Biblical Understanding of Leadership:** While all authority ultimately rests with Christ as head of the Church, the Bible clearly teaches that there should be a plurality of elders to lead and guide each local body of believers (Titus 1:1-5). This plurality of elders is both biblical and practical. It has the immense benefit of complementing the gifts of the pastor (a fellow elder) to ensure the proper shepherding of God's church. The primary role of the elders is that of shepherding the flock after the pattern of Christ (John 10:1-18) with special emphasis on teaching and prayer (Acts 6:4; 20:28). Specifically, elders are called by God to live as godly examples, to protect the body from false teaching and to oversee the affairs of the church (1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7; Acts 20:29-31; 1 Timothy 5:17). We believe that church leadership must be understood in its congregational context, consistent with biblical qualifications, committed to Christ-likeness and reflective of God's nature and character (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
12. **Biblical Understanding of Worship:** Worship is the proper response of all moral beings to God, ascribing all honor and worth to their Creator precisely because He is worthy. Biblical worship is God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-empowered (Ephesians 5:18), which manifests itself in all our living (John 4:23-24; 1 Timothy 1:17). It finds its source in the gospel, which restores our relationships with God and with

our co-worshippers (Romans 12:1). Such worship consists of adoration and action, both in the individual believer and in corporate worship (Hebrews 10:24-25). We will not capitulate to current trends to turn worship into entertainment or mere aesthetic experience, nor will we decide, by our own personal preferences, how we should worship God. Whether such worship is scriptural is not ultimately an issue of style, but rather that the content is biblical, the focus is God, and the purpose is His glory (Colossians 3:16-17).

**13. Biblical Understanding of Missions:** The last instruction that Christ gave prior to ascending to heaven was to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). The final goal of all things is that God might be worshiped with affection by a redeemed company of countless persons from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9; 7:9). Missions exists to expand the company of true worshippers. When the kingdom finally comes in glory, missions will cease. Until our Lord's imminent return, and consistent with our EFCA heritage, we have a passion to reach the world with the good news of Jesus Christ in word (Matthew 24:14) and deed (Matthew 5:16). Our desire is to make the beauty of God known (2 Corinthians 2:14-17) and the truth of the gospel understood (2 Corinthians 5:11), starting in our own neighborhood and extending to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). We will accomplish this by training and sending our own people and by partnering with like-minded missionaries and mission organizations worldwide.

#### Conclusion:

We seek to follow the revealed will of God and desire His blessing, trusting Him to increase the numbers of those who attend and join our body. We are committed to listening to God as He speaks in His Word and re-imagining a successful ministry, not as one that is immediately fruitful in terms of numbers, but one that is faithful to Scripture. By committing ourselves to a biblically-driven philosophy of ministry, we seek to be faithful to Christ, the true head and ruler of the Church, and to bring God glory as we minister together with Him and with one another.

#### Resources - Books

D. A. Carson, *Worship By the Book.* Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church.*

R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ.* John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad.*

Resources - Articles and Confessions Tim Keller, "Kingdom-Centered Prayer."

The Cambridge Declaration of 1996. The Westminster Shorter Catechism.

John MacArthur, *The Master's Plan for the Church.*

David Wells, *The Courage To Be Protestant.*

Bob Gillam, "The Importance of Fellowship in a New Testament Church."

*Our Heritage as the Evangelical Free Church of America: Values That Have Shaped Us.*

## **Transitional Pastor's Report**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to briefly summarize the past year, June 13, 2010 through May 22, 2011. It is presented in summary form for brevity and ease of understanding, and also to serve as points of discussion for the congregational meeting of May 22, 2011.

Here is a List of significant events and milestones for Clovis Evangelical Free Church for the past year:

### **Personnel Changes:**

- Gordon Ogden retired
- Tammy Donohoe resigned
- Peggy Welles hired to be financial bookkeeper
- Bob Turner volunteered to become the Director of Ministry Operations
- Wil Owens begins tenure as Pastor Teacher
- Al Oliver ends tenure as Transitional Pastor May 31, 2011

### **Operations and Procedures:**

- Completed Health and Benefits review for staff.
- Employee Handbook finished
- Personnel team initiated
- Job descriptions and classifications finished
- Operational Policies and Procedures manual underway
- Financial reporting system reviewed, revised and updated
- Building fund legal review.

### **Ministry activities:**

- Shepherding initiative started with every member and regular attender assigned to Elders and past elders as personal contact shepherds
- Preaching ministry completed a year-long series on the Philosophy of Ministry
- Search team success in identifying Dr. Wil Owens as the next Pastor Teacher.
- Congregation calls Dr. Wil Owens as the Pastor Teacher

### **Elder Notes:**

**Tom Whitling** serves as the board chair and oversees the shepherding initiative as well as coordinating the progress of the overall ministry alongside the Pastor-Teacher

**Dan Wuthrich** serves as the board vice-chair. Dan also serves in the area of adult ministry, pulpit ministry and search committee

**Greg Smith** serves in missions.

**Mark Schroeder** serves with the finance committee and worked very hard to help develop a forward looking budgeting process which will serve as a better planning tool for the future.

**Matt Verhalen** serves in the Youth ministry.

**Martin Mayfield** serves in the area of Mercy ministry as well as a pulpit ministry.

**Dave Martens** serves in the area of Worship arts

**Carl Schiefer** serves in the Children's ministry

**Bruce Turner** serves as a staff elder.

**Staff Notes:**

**Bruce Turner** - Bruce focuses on men's ministries, and development of general adult ministries and the integration of each respective area. Bruce also oversees the children's ministries in co-operation with Carl Schiefer and Tom Adams

**Tom Adams** - Tom focuses on his duties as worship arts pastor as well as having joint responsibilities with Bruce Turner and Carl Schiefer in the children's ministries.

**Bob Turner** - Bob Turner volunteers as the Director of Ministry Operations. Bob oversees and co-ordinates the administrative functions of the staff and facilities, including finance, personnel, and general administrative oversight.

**Ted Hawkins** - Ted volunteers as oversight for the Jr. High School ministry

**Terry Johnson** - Volunteers to oversee the High school ministry

**Traci Burdette** - Administrative assistant to Al Oliver, Tom Adams

**Linda Lesmerises** - Administrative assistant to the Shepherding Initiative and Bob Turner

**Angie Dietmeyer** - Serves as church custodian

**Peggy Welles** - Serves as Bookkeeper

**Elder Report**

Time has been spent on improving and coordinating elder/staff relationships, as well as working with ministry leaders to improve budgeting and control spending, and establishing a more formal direction for the elder board.

The shepherding groups were established this year to serve the members and regular attenders. Our goals are to get to know the people in our groups personally and develop regular contact. This coming year we will be looking to the Lord to lead us in discipling and mentoring, leading and protecting our flocks.

## Finance Ministry Team Report

### Finance Team Members:

Mark Schroeder - Treasurer

Peggy Welles - Bookkeeper

Robert LeRoy (CPA) - Member

Robert Turner - Director of Operations

Paul Toelke - Financial Secretary

Dennis Kinzel - Member

The fiscal year - June 2010 through May 2011 has had several significant challenges. The first notable challenge is the most obvious, the continued downturn in economy which no doubt affected giving. Also the unknown attendance level we would have for the fiscal year.

We set an aggressive budget with the understanding the congregation would meet two extra times during the year to review and determine if significant changes were needed. We are able to report that while we project ending this year 9% below budget for income, we had a spending reduction of 6% below budgeted expenses. Thanks to the excellent hard work of all the staff at watching expenses.

Other accomplishments this year included:

1. Completed and implemented a complete overhaul of all ministry budgets with the goal of being simple and understandable by ministry leaders and all members.
2. Transitioned giving records to new software
3. Established a new counting team headed by Paul Toelke - Finance Secretary
4. Moved bank accounts to a Christian financial institution, Evangelical Christian Credit Union.
5. Hired experienced part time bookkeeper, Peggy Welles

Our plans and challenges for Fiscal Year 2011 - 2012

1. Our new budget includes a 10% increase of income from last year's actual income.
2. The new budget equals last year's income plus \$50,000 added for Capital Improvements & Repairs and a slight increase of missions budget to equal 10% of overall budget.
3. Establish, Document and Implement church policy for financial operations and ministry expenses and fund raising
4. Transition in a new treasurer (Mark is terming out).

We'd like to thank Al Oliver and Bob Turner for their extra effort in managing and identifying priorities in making financial improvements. We also thank each of you for your faithfulness in giving as we all partner in ministry for the sake of our Lord Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,

Finance Team & Mark Schroeder, Treasurer

05/19/11

**Clovis Evangelical Free Church**  
**General Budget ~ Year to Date**  
 June 2010 through April 2011

|                       | <u>Jun '10 - A...</u> | <u>Budget</u>   | <u>\$ Over Bu...</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| <b>Income</b>         |                       |                 |                      |
| 4000 — Income         | 497,164.64            | 545,875.00      | (48,710.36)          |
| <b>Total Income</b>   | 497,164.64            | 545,875.00      | (48,710.36)          |
| <b>Expense</b>        |                       |                 |                      |
| 5000 — ELDERS         | 346,635.27            | 338,971.93      | 7,663.34             |
| 6000 — ADMINISTRAT... | 96,404.25             | 111,283.37      | (14,879.12)          |
| 6200 — ADULTS         | 1,422.63              | 6,141.63        | (4,719.00)           |
| 6300 — CHILDRENS      | 5,638.78              | 11,779.24       | (6,140.46)           |
| 6400 — STUDENTS       | 5,263.65              | 14,116.63       | (8,852.98)           |
| 6500 — WORSHIP        | 5,926.60              | 7,333.26        | (1,406.66)           |
| 6600 — MISSIONS       | 50,658.25             | 55,145.21       | (4,486.96)           |
| <b>Total Expense</b>  | 511,949.43            | 544,771.27      | (32,821.84)          |
| <b>Net Income</b>     | <u>(14,784.79)</u>    | <u>1,103.73</u> | <u>(15,888.52)</u>   |

Clovis Evangelical Free Church

Fund Balance Report

5/19/11

\$

|                              | End of May 2010   | End of April 2011 | DIFFERENCE        |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| DF DEACON FUND               | 23,029.45         | 12,800.90         | -10,228.55        |
| GF GENERAL FUND              | -30,466.62        | 68,560.30         | 99,026.92         |
| SF-10 IN/OUT ITEMS           | 19,850.31         | 14,034.72         | -5,815.59         |
| SF-12 BUILDING               | 615,496.93        | 487,192.98        | -128,303.95       |
| SF-20 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP    | 31.00             | 91.00             | 60.00             |
| SF-21 MEN' S MINISTRIES      | 830.23            | 675.43            | -154.80           |
| SF-45 RETIREMENT ACCURAL     | 306.00            | 0                 | -306.00           |
| SF-60 JR. HIGH ACTIVITIES    | 2,309.84          | 2,582.75          | 272.91            |
| SF-70 HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES | 20,600.38         | 17,929.44         | -2,670.94         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>651,987.52</b> | <b>603,867.52</b> | <b>-48,120.00</b> |

## *Director of Ministry Operations Report*

In late June 2010, Pastor Al asked me if I would help with the administrative duties for Clovis Evangelical Free Church (CEFC). With support from my wife, Carol, I have been privileged to assist in helping to identify and develop operational processes for CEFC as well as deal with the day to day administrative and facility related items. The following is a look back at what we have accomplished and a review of the things that we have yet to do.

### **Looking back over the last 11 months...**

#### **Financial Administration**

- Set up an offering counting procedure, formed a counting team, selected a financial secretary, and transitioned to a new giving accounting system
- Selected and put into place a new bank for the church, the Evangelical Christian Credit Union
- Searched for and hired an experienced, part time bookkeeper
- Issued a 2011-2012 budget schedule and prepared an initial budget for review by the Finance Team and Elder Board

#### **Office & Personnel Administration**

- Reorganized responsibilities and developed position descriptions for the office staff
- Prepared a listing of members and regular attenders for the Shepherding Initiative
- Worked with an outside benefits firm to select and implement a new health insurance plan
- Published an employee benefits information sheet

#### **Facilities**

- Hired qualified contractors to perform the work needed on the nursery building and moved the nursery to rooms 101, 102, and 103
- Replaced about 3/4 of the ground material in the playground with rubber bark
- Cleaned carpeting in the worship center and two classrooms and received bids for cleaning/replacement of other carpets/flooring
- Received bids for replacement of the educational building roofing

### **Looking Ahead...**

#### **Financial Administration**

- Refine the accounting processes and financial reporting

#### **Office & Personnel Administration**

- Finish position descriptions for the pastoral staff and Director of Ministry Operations and complete a policy and procedures manual

#### **Facilities**

- Complete the rework and move back into the nursery
- Replace the educational building roof

- Redo the exterior of the church and educational buildings
- Pursue improvement of the back lot for recreational usage
- Clean or replace flooring as needed

I did not do this myself—this is the work of the church body. So we need to thank all those that helped accomplish what has been done and who have been involved in the planning of what yet needs to be done...in particular, the Elders, Pastors Al, Bruce, and Tom, our administrative staff-Traci, Linda, Peggy, and Angie, and Paul Toelke, Norm Shamshoian, Karole Culy, Ralph Buchler plus the many other volunteers. To God be the glory!

### *Worship Arts Ministry*

Our goal in the Worship Arts Ministry is to create consistent worship experiences that allow CEFC to worship God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. This is accomplished by the worship team's faithful preparation each week. They prepare musically. This allows them to play music without having to be focused on the mechanics of making music. They prepare spiritually, so that their focus and attention is on Jesus. These preparations take away any distractions allowing our attention, as the congregation, to be directed to Jesus, where all of our attention belongs.

It has been exciting to see our level of worship deepen and grow over this last year. I believe this is a result of our study and understanding of "Church Essentials: Faith Commitments of a Healthy Church." Our unity and fellowship with one another has grown. Our corporate worship experience has exemplified this growth.

Highlights of the past year . . . at the end of August 2010, we celebrated the ministry and retirement of Gordon Ogden. In March, we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> and 89<sup>th</sup> birthdays of John and Charlotte Gabrielson. In December, we had a wonderful celebration of Christmas. Each week we had extra music accompanied by excellent musicians on a variety of instruments. April brought a great celebration of Easter. The Good Friday service incorporated an insightful, powerful reading, accompanied with music, that painted vivid images of our Lord's suffering. This was followed Sunday morning by a celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

## Missions Team Report

- JUNE:** Rob Wiens went to Kenya with Africa Inland Mission (AIM AIR) for two months exploring their aviation program.
- JULY:** The Burdette family went to Mexico. They were involved in work projects and VBS ministries.  
Kelsey Wagner and Matt Bartel went to Romania with Team Extreme to work evangelistically with children.  
Josh Yee worked with Campus Crusade for Christ in a South African University, developing student leaders.  
We joined with Pastor Henry Oputa of The Way Ministries near Jefferson, a neighborhood in downtown Fresno, to help with a VBS. We had up to 40 kids come on four nights, and over 20 volunteers; nine kids made decisions. Some volunteers continued to go on Friday nights and connect with those in the neighborhood. Our church also packed 20 backpacks with school supplies for children in the neighborhood.  
The Actis family left to settle into a church-planting ministry in Columbia with Christians in Action.
- AUGUST:** Five Day Club in Clovis at the Berney's home: 18 helpers, seven kids. It was a fantastic learning experience for the youth on the team. They experienced personal growth as they were challenged in leading worship and preparing the story time. It was a good introduction to Child Evangelism Fellowship.
- SEPTEMBER:** Missions Sunday: Shared with the congregation about summer ministries as well as the policy paper, "Steps for Involvement in Missions."  
We participated in the City Scope Tour with Inter Varsity's FIFUL (Fresno Institute For Urban Leadership). Our team was made up of high school, college age and adults who attended a Saturday seminar with an in-depth Bible study in Jonah, and visited the ministries and unique culture of downtown Fresno.
- OCTOBER:** Naomi Smith and Jason Dietmeyer left for Ivory Coast for one year with World Venture.
- NOVEMBER:** The Spencers came and shared about their work with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Brazil. We sent a group of high school students and young adults to the Urban Mission Fresno with Mennonite Brethren Mission. Over three days, seven college age leaders attended with approximately 20 of our high school youth. They stayed at Fresno Pacific University, participated in corporate worship and speaker sessions, and engaged in three different ministry sites downtown. They served the neighborhood with a Russian church, ran a basketball camp, staffed a

carnival with Care Fresno, and cleaned and sorted in the thrift store and helped with a Bible club along with World Impact.

Some of our participants continued working with World Impact.

DECEMBER: Victoria Maynez returned from 11 months on the Amazing Race.

JANUARY: Matt and Shelly Actis returned briefly from Columbia and gave greetings to the church. High School students put together a suitcase of Sunday school materials for the Actis family to take back. Greg Smith, Brian, Krista, and Gaylene DeMars, and Rob Wiens attend the semester course of "Perspectives in the World Christian Movement." They highly recommend it. The Missions Summit was held with Ric Escobar as the featured speaker in Sunday school and Sunday morning service. In the evening, we enjoyed a Mexican dinner with World Impact, the Fresno Rescue Mission, and Evangel Home. We learned about the many ways to volunteer in our area.

FEBRUARY: We welcomed new/returning members to the missions committee: Trevor and Jerre Reis, and Cheryl Wuthrich.

APRIL: Sam "Bala" Balachander shared in a morning service about his work in India with Emerging Young Leaders.  
Several of our congregation stepped forward to volunteer with the Pregnancy Care Center.

MAY: The Missions Committee visited with one of our supported missions groups-- Asian Partners.

### **Mercy Ministries Report**

Jesus lived with, ate with, and associated with lepers and outcasts, the lowest classes of society. We should do likewise. Luke 6:35, 36 "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

### **Women's Compassion Connection**

Women's Compassion Connection is open to women of all ages; single, married, or widowed. It is headed and organized by Bev Molatore. They meet for lunch one Sunday a month. It is a time of fellowship, encouragement, and edification. They have experienced growth this past year that includes several women who do not belong to any church. It is a great opportunity

to demonstrate the love of Christ to ladies who do not otherwise spend time with believers. In fact, those ladies are now inviting others. They are looking forward to another year of fun and fellowship.

### GriefShare Ministry

Griefshare is a Christ centered Biblical perspective support group designed to minister to people grieving the death of a loved one. Grief and the deep hurts that accompany it are among the most significant spiritual turning points in a person's life.

They continue to meet weekly as they have since the program began in August 2008. One to ten are in attendance each week with 90% coming from outside our church. Most attendees come for at least a year and are able to share their growth and healing with newer attendees.

We realize that the number of people who attend is not as important as providing those who are there with the tools and strategies that point to Christ as the source of healing.

### Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministers meet weekly with their care receivers to listen, care, encourage, and provide spiritual support. Men are matched with men, and women are matched with women. The caring relationship lasts as long as the person needs care. It is free and is a powerful way to extend mercy to those in need. Both church members and non-attendees may be recipients of Stephen Ministry. Since our previous director of Mercy Ministries retired, we have seen a decline in care receivers. At this time we are actively seeking new care receivers, as well as additional Stephen Ministers. Bill Hale heads up the Stephen Ministry.

## **Adult Ministry**

### *Looking Back...*

#### Summer Adult Class:

During the past summer, our adult classes joined forces to encourage greater church-wide participation through our summer class, "The Life of Christ." We were pleased with the increased attendance (40 to 60 people in 10 weeks) and enthusiasm through this series. Several new members joined our adult classes, Soul Café and Kingdom Living, in the fall.

#### Adult Bible Fellowships:

Through the school year, Soul Café completed their series in the book of Acts, conducted a topical study of the book of Proverbs, and started a series on I John. Our Kingdom Living class resumed their DVD series of systematic theology ("Foundations" with R. C. Sproul).

### **Bible Institute (Wednesday Evening Studies):**

On Wednesday evenings, we offered two theological book studies, The God Who Is There by D.A. Carson and The Reason for God by Tim Keller.

### **Overall:**

We have seen members of our congregation take a step forward in their biblical understanding and Christian fellowship. It's evident that people are growing in their walk with God and connecting in their relationships with other members of the Body.

### ***Looking Forward...***

#### **Adult Bible Fellowships:**

Our adult class leaders will meet to discuss a "Scope and Sequence" strategy for our adult ministries and how we can implement this philosophy in our future curriculum choices. We will also initiate a system for training potential teachers and discussion leaders on a regular basis.

#### **Bible Institute (Wednesday Evening Studies):**

We will create an expanded network of teachers to offer classes on books of the Bible, systematic theology, and other key Christian book studies.

#### **Small Groups:**

We will reorganize our small group ministry and assemble current and potential small group leaders to discuss communication, organization, and the idea of sermon-based study groups.

#### **Other:**

We will consider the possibility of a weekend Bible Conference as well as a couples' or family conference this year.

## **Men's Ministry**

### ***Looking Back...***

#### **Men's Care Commission:**

We are now into our second year of the Men's Care Commission ministry, serving the practical needs of single moms and widows in our church and community. We meet once a month, usually on the first Saturday morning of the month, and enjoy breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and time in the Word together. Then, we head out to complete the team project assigned for that day. It's our goal to not only address physical needs but also the spiritual and emotional needs. We work at building relationships with the care receiver through support, prayer, and encouragement. About twenty men in our church are faithful to this ministry. We serve between four and six care receivers each month.

There have been several exciting developments in this ministry over the past year. Men have invited their sons and friends to join the work of the commission. We have been able to support and encourage the work of the Yard Dogs (Saturday morning service at the church) by sending extra workers to assist them. We have observed how this ministry has encouraged the care receivers to connect in greater ways with our church family. And, finally, we have expanded our ministry to serve care receivers outside of our church family, ministering to real needs in our community and praying that these efforts would draw care receivers closer to the Lord.

### ***Looking Forward...***

We hope to expand our Men's Care Commission teams so that we can serve the needs of more care receivers. We plan to assemble a men's ministry team to evaluate our current ministry and brainstorm ways for men to build relationships and grow in their role as husbands, fathers, and spiritual leaders in the church and community. We will reorganize and revitalize our men's small group ministry and plan a men's retreat weekend.

### **Women's Ministry**

The Women's Ministry Team has endeavored to provide opportunity for the women in the church to build relationships and encourage each other in the Lord.

### ***Looking Back...***

We have sponsored Girls Night Out at Panera Bread, the Cook's, the Hiett's, the Richards', the Shamshoian's, the Whitling's, and the Yagura's. as well as an Open House at the Shamshoian's to meet Summer Owens.

### **Bible Studies:**

We hosted two studies in the fall (morning and evening). Both groups studied Beth Moore's "Here and Now, There and Then" which is about Revelation. In the spring, the morning group studied "From Queendom to Kingdom" by Pattie Krohn, and the evening group studied "Breaking Free" by Beth Moore. These studies were to encourage spiritual growth and build friendships.

### ***Looking Forward...***

Bible studies are planned for morning and evening, but the specific studies have not been chosen yet. We are also praying for the women's ministry team's growth. There are only two ladies on the team at this time. We are also hoping to plan day and/or weekend retreats and activities that encourage women to fellowship and support one another as well as grow together in Christ.

## Crossroads College Group

### ***Looking Back - The last year:***

Change. Change. Change. This last year was definitely characterized by change...and transitions. BIG transitions. Our students had quite a few significant life transitions in the last year...graduating from college, moving out, getting married, making initial career decisions. You name it...our group was going through it.

As they made their way through these life choices, we came to a realization: It was time for them to move on. It was time to "graduate" from college group. So what did we do? We graduated them! Many of them are now involved in a Young Adults group that meets on Monday nights. Others participate in Wednesday night Bible study. Virtually all of them are present on Sunday mornings and actively engaged in different ministries at church.

In the last year, Bruce and I have had more one-on-one meetings with students than at any other period in our group's recent history. Students sought advice from us about the decisions facing them.

Our students came to discover that, while they were still part of Crossroads College Group (and the larger body of Clovis Ev Free), their individual lives were quickly approaching a "crossroads." That is, God was leading them as individuals in different directions, whether it was relationships, career choices, schooling, or other personal decisions. What was wonderful to see (and another sign of their maturing into godly men and women) was how they sought out Bruce, Matt, and others in the church to meet with them individually to talk through these decisions. Many deep, significant conversations took place in Bruce's office, at Red Robin, Jus Jo's, Yosemite Falls, Jamba Juice, Starbucks, Tower Dog, Denny's, Deli Delicious, on a Saturday at the Schulz's (for lunch or dinner), over the phone, on Facebook chat, and even in the library and pub at Fresno State!

Two other indications of their overall growth and development:

Church membership - More of our students have become church members than any other previous college group class.

Ministry involvement - Virtually every member of the college group was (and still is) involved in some kind of ministry, often both at Clovis Ev Free and in the larger community. Significant to note is that students sought out these opportunities on their own, without prompting from Bruce or Matt.

In the last year—indeed the last 2-3 years—Crossroads College Group has experienced a multitude of blessings as we have partnered with our college students in helping them move from student life to adult life, discovering their God-given identity, gifts, and place in the Body of Christ.

### ***Looking Forward - The next 2-3 years:***

If in fact we "graduated" our last class, the natural question is, "What is going on now?"

The answer: Re-growth.

The beautiful thing about college ministry is that the group of students that God blesses us with largely defines the ministry itself. At Clovis Ev Free, we don't provide a ministry that students simply come and partake of. In fact, it is the students themselves who help form and define what our college ministry looks like.

Bruce and I have been blessed to meet with many of last year's high school graduates and this year's seniors, planting seeds and starting to develop new relationships. Since February, college ministry has largely been conducted through one-on-one conversations over the phone, Facebook chat, small group meetings with the seniors, and conversations over pizza or sandwiches with small groups of students.

We've spent a lot of time talking about what college ministry is, the recent changes with our last class of students, and why we "graduated" them. All of this has provided us the opportunity of getting to go deeper with these students, finding out more about them and where they are in life.

With the end of the school year quickly approaching, we are encouraged to see many of our sophomores and incoming freshmen excited about moving on to college ministry and becoming more involved and committed.

### ***"Fire By Nite" High School Ministry***

#### **Looking Back:**

**Sunday Morning** - In January we began a year-long series on the life of Jesus. We are using an Internet based curriculum that provides our teachers on-line access to weekly lessons and gives them flexibility in structuring their lessons.

**Teaching Series** - Over the past year on Thursday nights and Sunday mornings we have gone through the following series: Having a Christian Worldview, Christianity & the Cults, The Parables of Jesus, and the book of Jonah.

**2011 Seniors** - We have 12 students graduating this year, a number who have attended our church since early childhood. We are going to greatly miss them! They are the reason our staff serves and the evidence of the faithfulness of God in what we do. We have a similar number of incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders this year from our Wildfire Junior High.

**Winter Camp** - We ran our own winter camp ("What is the Will of God for My Life?") at Hume Lake, which reduced the cost significantly and allowed more students to attend. We are thankful for the members of our church body who allowed us the use of their cabins for this weekend.

**Urban Mission** - Our students served a weekend mission with other churches through Fresno Pacific University. Their time included worship, teaching, and service projects. A number of our students also assisted with an inner city Vacation Bible School over the summer.

**Volunteers** - A staff of 16 has served in this ministry over the last year. We are grateful for God's abundant provision of called and gifted people!!

### Looking Ahead:

**Wildwood Camp** - Our students will be attending the Wildwood Camp at Hume Lake as a youth group for the first time this August. This camp is based on a team-building concept and will challenge our students to deepen their walk with God.

**Experiencing God** - Many of our students and leaders will be working through the Experiencing God Bible Study this summer. This is a 12-week independent study with a blog set up so students and leaders can interact each week about what they are learning and being challenged by.

**Operation Good News** - Some of our students will be attending a week long Operation Good News program in San Diego this summer. They will study apologetics and theology and use these in practical application by sharing their faith with others. This is in conjunction with the Bridge Church in Fresno.

**Teaching** - We are continuing our Sunday morning series on the Life of Jesus through the end of the year. This summer our Thursday evenings series is entitled "Jesus Said What"? We will be looking at some of the very difficult things Jesus said.

**Scope & Sequence** - One of the important discussions we need to continue as we move forward involves scope and sequence. For us to strategically plan four years of high school curriculum two big bookend questions have to be answered: #1 What should our students know when they finish the 8<sup>th</sup> grade? #2 What should they know when they graduate from high school? These questions don't just involve knowledge but areas such as spiritual maturity, behavior, experience, and spiritual disciplines. We look forward to this continuing discussion.

## Wildfire Junior High Ministry Report

### **Blessed be the Name of the Lord!**

Over the course of the past year, God has met every need in our ministry. During this period, the Wildfire Junior High Ministry focused on the continuing development of holiness and love within our young people and staff. Our burgeoning young adults are growing in maturity and their willingness and ability to participate fully in this body.

Our theme verse for this past year was 2 Corinthians 6:17 - 7:1 **"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.** **"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."**

### Goals & Expectations:

We believe that junior highers are no longer children, but young adults. We expect to have a ton of fun, but we also expect them to contribute. We expect them to participate as part of the church family, to serve others, and grow in maturity. As we dig deeply into God's Word, students will find opportunities to serve with adults in other age groups of the church. Our Goals include:

1. Develop strong and healthy relationships with students while encouraging strong family relationships.
2. Guide unbelieving students into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and instill a firm assurance of salvation to each and every believer (I John 5:11-13).
3. Provide tools by which students may live godly and pure lives in a broken world—separate unto God (Col. 1:10-12 and II Cor. 6:17-7:1).
4. Encourage young people to embrace full participation in church.
5. Provide support as each child makes their own faith real, relevant and vibrant.
6. Provide the fundamentals of evangelism to each student (John 4:34-38).
7. Establish a real atmosphere of worship focused on Christ Jesus and away from self (John 3:30 and Matt. 16:24-25).

Our students have been faithfully herded this year by a staff which includes: Andrew & Angie Dietmeyer, Brad Paulson, David Jennings, Tim & Karen Parker, Michaela Parker, Chris Roland, Jennae England, and Dexter Fischer.

### Teaching:

Teaching this year was shared primarily between Tim Parker and me; Our students also enjoyed the teaching of Pastor Al and Matt Verhalen on a few occasions.

Our Sunday school time is devoted to searching God's Word in ever-increasing depth. This year we conducted a survey of the New Testament Gospels. Our intent was to give students a more global understanding of Christ's ministry on Earth.

We used a three-pronged attack in our Wednesday night teaching program. We rotated between topics addressing "What We Believe," "Hot Topics" that junior highers are dealing with, and "Relationship Issues."

This summer we will teach from Galatians on Sunday mornings and from Proverbs in our Wednesday night Bible study. Next fall we anticipate conducting an Old Testament overview and digging into First John.

### **Activities:**

We continued, this year, to conduct a number of favorite and traditional activities for our youth group—a bonfire event, a progressive dinner, an all-nighter. We've also continued our on-going service project by maintaining our adopted flowerbed area in the front of the church. Most ambitiously, though, we conducted our own Junior High retreats. Our young ladies spent a weekend together at the Whitling's Barn, and the following weekend, our young men spent the weekend at the Barn. We studied Colossians 3:1-17: "Rules for Holy Living." This was a challenging and exciting time as we continued to advance on our goals by the grace and wisdom of Christ Jesus as He gave us strength.

In the King's Service,  
Ted Hawkins  
Director of Junior High Ministries

## **Children's Ministry**

### ***Looking Back...***

In the summer of 2010, the younger elementary students explored choices through the life of Joseph. The older elementary students were equipped to share their faith through Evangelism Explosion training. Children's workers, high school students, and parents were trained to run a 5-Day Club through Child Evangelism Fellowship. In July, children's ministry workers and parents assisted with a 5-Day Club in downtown Fresno. A team conducted a 5-Day Club at the Berney's home in August.

We experimented with Group's "Faithweaver" curriculum for the first hour during the 2010-2011 school year. It was our goal to assure that all children were studying the same Bible story and memorizing the same verses. We also helped the parents connect with these lessons through the parent pages. During the second hour, we offered Children's Church using Group's "Kids Own Worship." The lesson built on what the children had learned in the first hour. We offered a weekly Bible reading program, ("The Great Bible Adventure") to encourage the students to further grasp the flow of the Bible.

Following the resignation of our Children's Ministry Director, Pastor Al, Pastor Bruce, Pastor Tom, and Carl Schiefer met to discuss how we would provide oversight to this vital church ministry. Pastor Tom was responsible for the week-to-week operation. Pastor Bruce was responsible for the future planning aspects. Pastor Al and Carl have been covering the Sunday morning prayer time with and encouragement for the Children's workers. We conducted a parent meeting in late February to discuss the opportunity for various team members to work in Children's Ministry. The most pressing needs are Team Coordinators to communicate with teachers and helpers and Future Planning Team members to work on projects for the summer and the fall.

### ***Looking Forward...***

We are hosting a Parent Forum on Wednesday, June 1, to discuss this summer's activities.

We will launch our Children's Ministry Summer Series, "God's Gym," during the first hour on Sunday, June 12. The goal of this ten-week series is to integrate children into the life of the church by providing the knowledge and skills for them to see their vital role in the Body of Christ. We will be teaching basic theology and spiritual disciplines with specific points of application. It's our desire to assist them in discovering how to worship alongside their parents and families in the Sunday morning worship service. For this summer, we are not planning to offer a separate venue (aka "Children's Church") during the worship service. We are looking for team members to shepherd and teach the children as well as prepare for the series.

Our Summer Events team is making plans with children and their families in mind. We will be offering Family Fun Nights, Sports Nights, Swim Parties and Barbeques, Skate Nights, Service Projects, Movie Nights, and 5-Day Clubs in our community. We have seven students participating in Wagon Train Camp in June.

We will be assembling a team of people to research, discuss, and decide on a curriculum for our 2011-2012 school year. This team will review our Philosophy of Ministry, Scope and Sequence, and several recommended materials and discuss the curricula choices that would match where God is leading our Church and Children's Ministry.