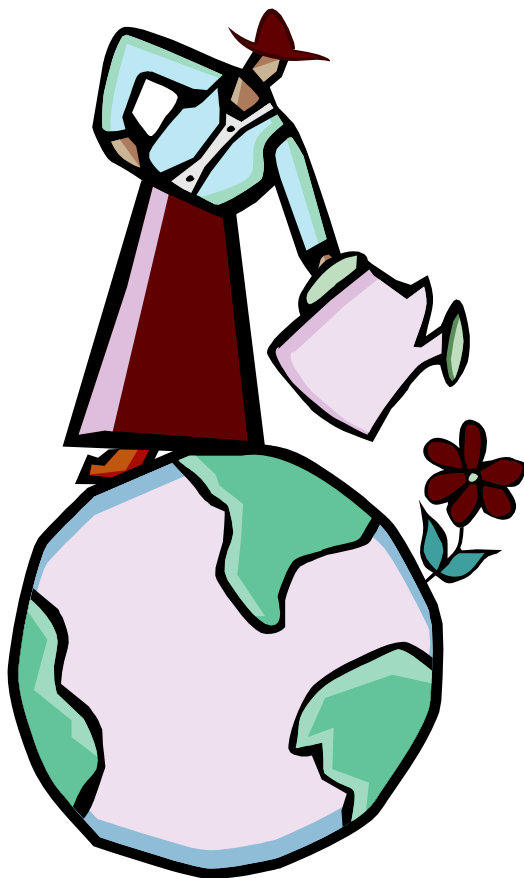




# *“The Vine”*

*Growing Together in Christ*

Newsletter for New Hope Christian Fellowship



## *Evangelism*

*Walking Across  
The Room*

*Turning The World  
Upside-Down*

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*More Confession From an Angry Man*

*The Ultimate Game of Clue*

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## From Pastor Dennis

### Just Walk Across the Room

"The church is the only society in the world that exists for its nonmembers." Those words were spoken in the early 1900s by William Temple, then Archbishop of Canterbury, and yet they have been true since Jesus began his church 2,000 years ago. When a church turns inward, she abandons her calling. The single greatest gift Christians can give to the people around them is an introduction to the One who created them, who loves them, and who has a purpose for their life.

We just presented a three-part sermon series on evangelism and will offer two equipping workshops in October and November on how to share your faith and how to present the Gospel. Many of you noted in the recent congregational survey that you feel comfortable inviting others to church but would like a class where you can better learn how to share your faith.

We can learn valuable insight from some of the great evangelists of our time, and have used some materials for this evangelism teaching effort produced by Bill Hybels, who pastors Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago. I also recommend his book, *Just Walk Across the Room*. (Zondervan Publishing, c. 2006) Evangelism can be as simple as taking a walk across a room.

To "evangelize" is to share good news. Every Christian can love, pray, invite and share good news. The words 'good news' or 'gospel' occurs in the New Testament more than 75 times. Philip, the evangelist "evangelized" or shared the good news with a man reading Isaiah - Acts 8:34-35 - "The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."

Each of us must leave our "Circles of Comfort" and "just walk across the room" or the workplace or the neighborhood to

someone living far from God. Once we walk into "the zone of the unknown," we need to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and rely on Him to help us to know what and what not to say.

We can practice with the Three-Minute Rule after our worship service each Sunday. From now on will you resolve to spend the first three minutes after church meeting and talking with someone you don't know or don't know very well? People new to our church will leave shortly after our service, so that first three minutes is Prime Time - it may be the only time you have to connect with them.

Walk-across-the-room people live life in "3D." They constantly look for ways to: *Develop* friendships, and then *Discover* the stories of people who are living far from God. Everyone has a story. If you hear it, you will better understand that person and know better how to relate to them. Then *Discern* appropriate next steps in how to interact with this person through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we love Jesus, we will care about those He loves. Jesus has a passion for all those living far from God (Luke 19:10). Let us hear God's voice, take the risk and "just walk across the room." If you do, it can be a walk that touches eternity.

**Many would like  
a class where  
you can better  
learn how to  
share your faith.**

## *The Vine* *Growing Together in Christ*



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## Personal Testimony

### The War Within

There is a war, there is a fight, there is a battle going on inside me. You ask me how I feel. I say fine when I'm most miserable. You ask me how I am doing. I may say okay, when I've made the worst decision in my life.

I couldn't control my feelings and made poor decisions that seriously affected the life of my wife and eight children until this day. When my anger rises up again, and it will, I can say, "Cool it man, cool it. Lord help me!"

I was set up in my mother's womb after listening to my mom arguing, fussing and fighting. When I came out of my comfort zone, I was ready to fight. And after my mom left me to find work in another city it got worse. My dad was alive, but dead to me. My mom's middle sister said I was the best crying baby in the world. She used to nurse me from crying, no wonder I was mad, she had no milk.

My Aunt Lou Desser never talked much until chore time. "Go get water, feed the pigs, and milk the cow." There wasn't much use for me after I burned the barn down trying to warm my freezing hands while milking the cow. I was set up for emotional trauma.

Many times I lost it - in the Air Force, my marriage, and at home. I did what I felt like doing and I called myself a Christian with all these hidden secrets. Remember the old man is still hurting for my family and I can only tell you one true story at a time.

In 1972 I was working as a custodian at Ambassador College. I had an altercation with a man in white, one of my supervisors. I was the head man on a crew system for all the restrooms on campus. Ten years of his inspections of every corner and every crack. Don't get me wrong he was the most proficient job-oriented supervisor I ever worked for. In my opinion his only weakness was not knowing how to deal with people. I was afraid to talk and tell him what was on my mind. While vacuuming the main auditorium I decided to change orders. I



thought it would be faster if we did it my way. My supervisor caught me and I knew I was being insubordinate. He nailed me with these words. "Suppose you would have died," meaning I would have accomplished more territory by doing it his way. Big crocodile tears came rolling down my cheeks

Some strange thing happened to my heart and mind. Something triggered inside and my emotions went out of control. All the hurt and things that people said about me fell on top of me all at once - words of the past like, "you're no good," "not going to amount to nothing," "can't do nothing right," the scolding of my mother, the absence of my father. My manhood felt threatened. My emotion responded.

Crying, I began to say, silently moving my lips, "I love you. I love you. I love you," until I was calm. I've used those same words maybe to some of you. I gave no thanks to God and hardened my heart again after interviewing the remorseful feeling of hate, the kind of hate that causes destruction today. My hurt feelings lingered on like a cancer cell. I made a decision to run. I quit, asked for my service pay, about \$700, enough for food and gas to make it to High Point, NC.

I gave away a 4-bedroom English brick home overlooking JPL in Altadena that someone gave me, packed my sick wife and 8 kids in a little red Econoline Ford van and off we went back home to mamma. One lady co-worker gave me some good advice. She said, "You'sa fool." I didn't listen. I was listening to my own feelings gnawing on me like a rat gnawing on wood. I left good old Pasadena and said goodbye.

We went home to my mother's house. Two-bedrooms and kids everywhere you stepped. I got me a job working for the city highway. Jack hammering and mixing cement for new bricks around the sewer holes and drains for the city of High Point. My stepfather said, "Boy you better find you another job." He was a lot smarter than I was; the job was killing me.

I got a job in the city school as the Ferndale Elementary laundry boy and only custodian. I did window See War on Page 4



## From Tammy Tkach

### The Ultimate Game of Clue

The butler in the dining room with a wrench! Colonel Mustard in the kitchen with a candlestick! Most people will recognize these phrases from the game of *Clue*. For those not familiar with *Clue*, it's a board game where the players receive clues about a crime. The first one to solve it wins.

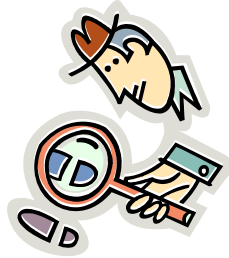
Mysteries are fun, whether in books, movies or games. I enjoy the twists and turns of a good whodunit, though I'm not too good at solving them. Perhaps you're not a mystery fan. But if you own a Bible, you hold one of the greatest mysteries of all time in your hands. Some of the mysteries are unsolvable, at least for now. For example, we don't know the authors of some parts of the Bible. Answers to many questions about what happens after death must wait.

How the words can be relevant after 2,000 years is a wonder. The Bible is called the living Word - how that is possible is a mystery of the Holy Spirit. And then you have God himself - He is in many ways unfathomable to us, especially His triune nature.

The Bible does provide clues about many of its mysteries, if you read it with that in mind. I like to look for clues that round out my picture of who God is. Ephesians 2:10 says we are God's masterpiece. Most of us read it thinking of ourselves as a masterpiece. But this is actually a clue about God, telling us he is an artist - an artist with a beautiful piece, who takes delight in his work and has a purpose for it.

Again in Ephesians 5:19, Paul says when the Holy Spirit leads us, we will sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. We read this thinking about the singing we do. But this is also a clue about God. He's a musician and He has given us the gift of song, which pleases him.

We've been given other clues about who God is. They are all around us in nature. I love to watch the hummingbirds come to the feeders in the morning and evening. They are



beautiful creatures, so tiny but so fast. They buzz all around the yard, chasing each other and chittering loudly. Job tells us God created all the animals. From the variety we see his imagination, genius and artistry.

David said the heavens declare God's glory. All we have to do is look up in the night sky to believe this. We can see more of God's imagination and creativity through the technology that allows us to see things light years away. Every day I check a website from NASA showing amazing pictures of nebulae, galaxies and constellations. These are yet more clues about our Creator.

In Jesus' prayer in John 17, he said, "This is the way to have eternal life - to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth" (NLT). When we look for clues about who God is, we're not just playing a game; we're experiencing the joys of eternal life by getting to know our wonderful God. - *By Tammy Tkach*

### War From Page 3

washing nine hours a day. After working nine hours, I went to college 3 hours a night. After that, I went home, ate, picked up the boys, and cleaned my cousin's office until midnight. The boys and I mowed the grass on Sundays. After 2 years I was working harder than I ever worked in my life. I was one tired dad.

I started suffering from depression, screaming at my wife and kids. I didn't want to eat crow. I didn't want to admit that my way wasn't working.

Forgiveness was available. I didn't want it. I didn't want no one to know how I treated my wife or that I was too hard on the kids. Things will change I said, but I got worse. I wanted to do it my way. I toyed with the idea of coming back to California.

I was burned out. Right decisions were never my forte. I felt like a failure. My stepfather told me that I didn't have a bit of sense. How about your family boy? You don't have no money. How are you going to get back? I told him that I would like to buy his old truck. I found an old homemade wooden camper shell - too heavy, but I took it anyway. A church member would've given me one if I asked. See War on Page 5





## Devotional

### How Long Will They Not Believe In Me...?

Numbers 14:11 Strive with all diligence to keep out the monster of unbelief. It is so dishonoring to Christ that He will withdraw His visible presence if we insult Him by tolerating it. It is true it is a weed that we can never entirely remove from the soil, but we must aim at its root with zeal and perseverance.

Among hateful things it is the most to be defeated. Its hurtful nature is so poisonous that he that uses it and he upon whom it is used are both harmed by it. In your case, believer, it is most wicked, for the mercies of your Lord in the past increase your guilt in doubting Him now. When you distrust the Lord Jesus, He may well cry out, "Behold, I will press you down in your place, as a cart full of sheaves presses down."

To doubt is to crown His head with thorns of the sharpest kind. It is very cruel for a well-beloved wife to mistrust a kind and faithful husband. The sin is needless, foolish, and unwarranted. Jesus has never given the slightest ground for suspicion, and it is hard to be doubted by those to whom our conduct is consistently affectionate and true. Jesus is the Son of the Highest and has unlimited wealth; it is shameful to doubt Omnipotence and distrust His sufficiency. The cattle on a thousand hills will be enough for our most hungry feeding, and the granaries of heaven are not likely to be emptied by our eating.

If Christ were only a cistern, we might soon exhaust His fullness, but who can drain a fountain? Countless believers throughout the ages have drawn their supplies from Him, and not one of them has complained at the

insufficiency of His resources. Dispel this lying traitor unbelief, for his only errand is to cut the bonds of communion and make us mourn an absent Savior. Bunyan tells us that unbelief has "as many lives as a cat"; if so, let us kill one life now, and continue the work until the whole nine are gone. Down with you, traitor, my heart detests you. - Taken from "Morning

and Evening," written by C.H. Spurgeon, revised and updated by Alistair Begg. Copyright (c) 2003, Good News Publishers and used by Truth for Life with written permission. Scripture quotations are taken from Holy Bible: English Standard Version, copyright (c) 2001, Good News Publishers. [http://www.truthforlife.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5867&news\\_iv\\_ctrl=0&abbr=tl](http://www.truthforlife.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5867&news_iv_ctrl=0&abbr=tl)

### War From Page 4

But I didn't want anyone to know.

The kids was used to me making foolish decisions. They would snicker and giggle behind my back. My wife had nothing to say but stared at me and sometimes joined the children snickering. I'm the man. I do what I want to do. I had an attitude. I knew a lot about the law, but very little about Jesus.

I packed the old truck with food, water and blankets, kissed my wife and kids goodbye, and slowly left the projects. I got onto the main highway crying like a baby. I came back to California alone. I parked in an alley behind a liquor store where gamblers, druggies, winos, alcoholics and thieves passed the time away night and day. That was my home for months.

I begged for my job back. They put me under the same supervisor I had problems with. His first words were, "I heard you quit because of me." We talked. In our conversation he told me he was an orphan and at the age of 19 he joined the Navy and made chief petty officer. He invited me to a meal at his home. He played the organ and we really got to know each other. We grew closer together like Mutt and Jeff.

I cry and ask God to forgive me for passing onto my children the "hoity-toity hop hill feelings" of a fool's decision. The old man is still learning from the word of God. Here is a piece of gold for you. "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine powers to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

The old man is still learning.

- By Willie Edwards



## Evangelism

### Turning the World Upside-Down: Chinese Christians

Every week during the fall, approximately 70,000 attend NFL games in cities like Detroit and Houston.

They pay hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars for the privilege, and, if all goes well, they come away with some happy memories.



Every week throughout the year in China, approximately 70,000 people do something very different: they, too, pay a price, but it's not measured in money. And what they come away with not only changes their lives but promises to change a nation, a continent, and even the world.

According to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, ten thousand Chinese become Christians every day. That's 70,000 a week!

At the time of the Communist takeover in 1949, there were 4 million Christians in China. Today, there are an estimated 111 million, which makes China the third-largest Christian country in the world, behind the United States and Brazil. By 2050, the Center estimates that the number of Christians will have doubled.

The explosive growth of Christianity in China is only part of a larger story. The ordeal of Korean missionaries at the hands of the Taliban in Afghanistan reminds us of Christianity's growth in Korea.

A happier story is the one Chuck told "BreakPoint" readers about the people called the Nagas. Little more than a century ago, these people living in the area where India and Burma meet were headhunters. Today, an estimated 90 percent of the population attends church on Sunday, and Christian leaders there have set the goal of sending 10,000 missionaries to the rest of Asia.

The Asia Times columnist "Spengler" recently wrote that China may soon occupy the role that the United States has occupied for the past 200 years: "the natural ground for mass evangelization." He adds that "if this occurs, the world will change beyond our capacity to recognize it."

He foresees Chinese Christians, like their Korean counterparts, "[turning] their attention outward." Only, with a Christian population fifteen times the size of Korea's, and a Chinese Diaspora all over the world, the impact will be far greater. "Spengler" uses the word "earthquake" to describe it.

According to John Allen of the National Catholic Report, the most "audacious" Chinese Christians dream of taking the Gospel along the historic "Silk Road" into Muslim lands. As David Aikman has written, they believe it is their task to complete the mission of preaching the Gospel in every land. To that end, Chinese Christians are already secretly "training missionaries for deployment in Muslim countries."

This is what "Spengler" means by an "earthquake." As he puts it, "the greatest danger to Islam" comes from Chinese Christians looking westward towards Jerusalem.

What's remarkable is this vision is taking shape even as Chinese Christians undergo persecution. Then again, Christianity's initial explosion took place under even worse conditions. So it probably shouldn't surprise us that there are more Chinese worshipping in "house churches" than belong to the Communist party.

According to "Spengler," the "fearless" Chinese evangelists may do more to transform their nation and the world than all the armies and diplomats combined. That would be an earthquake worth experiencing.

- *This commentary was delivered by Prison Fellowship President Mark Earley*  
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