

COC Connection

PASTOR'S CORNER

19th & C Streets, Antioch, 778-1893 July - September 2010

After 3 days soaking in, the majesty and beauty of Yosemite, with the towering shear granite pinnacles surrounding the valley everywhere you look, and the gushing waterfalls pouring over the crests above and crashing to the valley floor...I was humbled and deeply moved. The morning before driving out of the valley...I stopped at the village store and picked up a few items for the trip home. I asked the man behind the cash register...if the people who worked there got to live there...He said in a very monotone manner, "yes...we live here." I asked him if the majesty of this place ever loses its luster. He responded by saying, in a thoughtful musing kind of way, with a country drawl, "You know...it does lose its fascination"...then he stopped everything he was doing like he had something important to say...and he went on with an air of cynicism, pausing after each phrase..."You know what...I've come to see that all I'm doin is livin in a big ditch...everywhere you look up...all you see is just a bunch of rocks...If I want to go bowling...have to go a hundred miles...if I want some good coffee have to go a hundred miles...If I want to go to a decent grocery store I have to travel one hundred miles...I'm just livin in a big ditch" - By then another customer stepped up and I said good-bye.

It got me to thinking...Is it possible to live amidst the miraculous...To behold the greatest majesty of all and find it dull? To have a love relationship with the One who created the Universe...To be able to call Him Father...To be recipients of undeserved forgiveness...To know He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities...He doesn't keep a record of our sins but forgives...To know His grace (underserved favor)...and mercy (deserved punishment withheld)...To know we can't do anything to make Him love us more...and we can't do anything to make Him love us less...To know His unfailing...unchanging love? Is it possible to live surrounded by and even indwelt by towering majesty and be unmoved and even cynical? It certainly is...and this is something we all need to be careful of.

The apostle Peter says we have been given, "*very great and precious promises, so that through them*" (we) "*may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*" Then Peter gives a list and a warning. He lists the virtues we should make every effort to add to our faith; *goodness...knowledge...self-control...perseverance...godliness... brotherly kindness and love* so that we will be effective and productive in our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then he delivers the warning... "*If anyone does not have them, (the list), he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.*" Seven times in his second letter, Peter refers to our memory. He writes "*has forgotten*" (1:9), "*I...remind you*" (1:12), "*refresh your memory*" (1:13), "*remember these things*" (1:15), "*written as reminders*" (3:1), "*I want you to recall*" (3:2), "*do not forget*" (3:8). He knows how easy it is for us to become distracted and forget the most important things.

Let's not forget where we've come from...Let's not forget what God has done through Christ with each of us in mind. Let us remember how amazing forgiveness is and not take it for granted.

A Prayer for Today

God, refresh our memories today to be moved to astonishment and appreciation that we are recipients of Your mercy. Help us to consciously acknowledge the miracle of living in relationship with You today. Help us to lean hard on You today.

Some Changes at the COC

If you are on our e-mail list, you have heard already about the COC losing its lease and needing to move. If not, I will share a little here. Pastor Larry mentioned it and asked for prayer last Sunday in all four services...

Just as Larry mentioned, we are hoping to be able to stay where we are, until we have secured another location. The COC has always been God's Mission and He has raised up a wonderful team of workers. You have been used to transform many lives. There are many powerful stories that have been written and are being written, on the hearts of those we serve. We believe the passion extended to the low income and homeless adults, youth and children of Antioch has been God driven and that what He has begun will be continued and led by Him.

This leads me to say that you have prayed with us for years concerning a new building and for expansion. We have reached capacity in so many areas at the C & 19th location. Please pray for God's guidance as we hope to locate a permanent home for the COC and we are currently discussing a certain property...

We believe God is orchestrating this. We need to demonstrate to our landlord and others, who are watching, a grace they may never see anywhere else. Please pray for them and their success. Pray that we will be sensitive to His guiding hand. Pray God will use this to expand His kingdom work in our city, for His glory.

Great Quote by John Piper **from his book, "A Hunger For God"**

"Fasting comes in alongside prayer with all its hunger for God and says, "We are not able in ourselves to win this battle. We are not able to change hearts or minds. We are not able to change world-views and transform culture and save 1.6 million children. We are not able to reform the judiciary or embolden the legislature or mobilize the slumbering population. We are not able to heal the endless wounds of godless ideologies and their bloody deeds. But, O God, you are able! And we turn from reliance on ourselves to you. And we cry out to you and plead that for the sake of your name, and for the sake of your glory, and for the advancement of your saving purpose in the world, and for the demonstrations of your wisdom and your power and your authority over all things, and for the sway of your Truth and the relief of the poor and the helpless, act, O God. This much we hunger for the revelation of your power. With all our thinking and all our writing and all our doing, we pray and we fast. Come. Manifest your glory."

Most Exciting Class Yet - Gospel Class 8 Week Approach

This has so far been the most exciting class we've ever had. We are half way through this 8 week class. There are more students than ever before...and there is high enthusiasm while almost everyone is stretching beyond their comfort zones and exercising the gospel. Thanks to the commitment of many coaches...who are working with the students on a weekly basis, to the leaders who have opened their homes for the mid week content-discussion groups (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights) and for the commitment of leaders to be available for outreach every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings and every Friday night. Thanks to the students for hanging in there. God has raised up some great leaders and future leaders for this class...

We will probably stay with the 8 week concept for the gospel class. The next classes will likely be in October and November...of this year. **If Interested** call Pastor Gary at 778-1893 or Tracie Banke @ 516-0653 Ext. 232

Prayer Requests for the COC

- Pray for God's guiding Hand on the COC...for a permanent home and expansion of His Work.
- The Youth group at the COC is called **"The J Walk."** The theme verse for the group is 1 Peter 2:9 *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light..."* To be paraphrased...Walking with Jesus out of the dark streets they live in and into His Light. Pray God give our youth leaders wisdom as they work to be Christ incarnationally to the city's youth. If interested in helping with the youth, please contact Wayne Stolhand at 634-5354 or email @ stolhand1@aol.com.
- We have huge needs to build our **Children's teachers teams**. If you are interested in serving needy children (ages 4-12), any weeknight from 5:15 to 6pm please call Tracie at x232
- **SATURDAY KIDS CLUB** is the First & Second Saturday of the month from 10:30am to 12:30pm. We are praying for the right people to enlarge our teams here. If interested in serving please contact Julie Verhoek @ 240-1128.
- Please pray God will expand our impact into the community through the **Resource and Referral Ministry** We have dreams of seeing a Resource and Referral Center in downtown Antioch where we can be open 5-6 days a week...helping to bridge people's needs with already existing resources...helping with housing, jobs, resumes, typing letters, filling out applications, etc...and sharing Christ along the way. We are open 2 days per week. We would like to enlarge our teams who meet every Tuesday & Thursday. No experience necessary. If you are interested, please call Tracie at x232.
- We do **Monthly field trips** where we'll take anywhere from 30 to 130 of our guests and others from our community somewhere many of them have never been...What an opportunity for families to model for their kids or for care groups or others to serve and be the church breaking huddle and modeling clean and sober fun...sharing the love of Christ... If interested in helping in the ministry, please contact Angela Gallegos at 437-3245 or email @ creationbyangela@att.net.

Prayer Requests from Our Guests at the COC

Mark:

I need to ask for prayer for Francis. For the decisions he must make as “Head of the household”.

Confidential:

Lord please watch over my family and our health.

Phillip:

Pray that I get the apartment I need. Also that I will find a place to sleep tonight so I can work tomorrow.

Loni:

Please ask Jesus to stop the police from harassing the homeless.

Jose:

Pray for my children, for my future with my so to be wife, for Craig’s family and friends.

Erika:

Please pray for me that I get stronger each and everyday. I ask for prayer for my friend in Oregon. I ask that the Lord release him from his pain and come back to the living. God touch his heart so he can see that people do love and care for him.

Confidential:

Lord keep us safe and the bad away.

Jimmy:

I would like prayer that God blesses me with a favorable outcome in my disability case. Also that he continue to bless me financially and otherwise. Pray for my family and give me

guidance and direction to know his will and purpose for me.

Confidential:

Please pray that he finds suitable housing for me and my children. Also pray that I do not give up on life and revert back to my old ways. Please guide me on the path of the Lord.

Confidential:

Please pray I stay on the right path and not to give up on my journey of recovery. Pray that I do not loose my faith. Also pray for guidance.

Lisa & Robert:

Thank you Father God for all the blessings and your word. Thank you for today. Robert was off and we spent time together with my son. What a blessing!!!. Thank you for keeping us humble. I’m still in awe with our lives today.

Loni:

Please ask Jesus to bring Jeff home from jail.

Jimmy:

Please pray that I would stop gambling and that I continue to stay clean and sober. Also that I work on my other character defects.

Candace:

Pray for Tatiana, Joshua, Mom, Dennis and me.

Robert:

I ask for prayer concerning the teenagers here in Contra Costa County.

Mary:

Please pray for salvation for my six sons’.

Elizabeth:

Please keep praying for Craig’s family and friends. Also pray for my niece Allison.

Confidential:

Pray for Gary Michael and Myself.

Steve & Carol:

Pray for my friend Pam, my brothers and sisters, their kids, Carol, her kids and grandkids.

Sal:

Please pray for Debbie and Neal that they hear his word.