

THE ENCOURAGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUDSON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Let's talk about Jesus



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Most of us have a strong desire to be sharing Jesus with others. We want our friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to come to faith in Christ, and we would like to share the gospel with them. However, that can feel like the most unnatural thing in the world. We often don't know where to start or how to jump into a conversation about the gospel in a way that doesn't seem forced or contrived.

I think part of that is we feel a pressure to deliver the gospel all in one package. We feel like we need to begin with sin and finish with baptism in order for the conversation to "count." Let me encourage you that most effective evangelism happens in much smaller "bites." For those whom we have a lot of natural interaction with, we will have lots of opportunity to make small statements here and there in our relationship with them.

Rather than looking for an opportunity to tell someone the whole story about what you believe about Jesus and salvation, look for opportunities to bring your faith into conversation. Is someone commenting on how well a situation worked out for you? Say something like, "The Lord is always watching out for me." Is something not going according to plan? Say something like, "Jesus knows what he is doing." Someone encouraging you to join them in sin? Follow Joseph's example and say, "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?"

Our relationship with Jesus influences how we think and respond to everything in our lives. An effective way to help people know Jesus the way we do, is to allow them to see and hear how knowing Christ influences us. In time, even if they don't believe the way you do, they will be able to think from your perspective. That will go a long way in helping them turn to the Lord themselves.

I think this is what Paul had in mind when he told us to "make the most of every opportunity." Not every situation is an opportunity to give the whole gospel message. However, everyday situations may be holding more opportunity in them than what we have been seeing them as.

When someone is stressed or shares their burdens with you, let them know that you will pray for them, and then follow up later telling them you have been praying and asking how it has been going. This will be an opportunity for God to get the glory for the good he has brought into their lives.

God is always showing kindness in people's lives, even when they don't recognize it. He causes it to rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. We call all the blessing that God brings into the lives of all people "common grace." Helping people to see this common grace and to thank God for it is part of the process of evangelism. After all, we evangelize not just so that people can escape hell and spend eternity with Christ, but first and foremost because they were created to worship and glorify God, and they aren't doing that until they rightly know him through Christ!

Bringing our relationship with God more into our everyday conversation is good for our own souls as well. Scripture says that "in him we live, move, and have our being." As we are looking for ways to talk about Jesus more in our day-to-day dealings, we will become more and more aware how much how we live our day-to-day lives matters to Christ...and how much we are dependent on him at all times.



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This kind of speech may sound strange or unnatural at first, but it really used to be the common way Christians lived and spoke in society. Even something as commonplace as telling someone "goodbye" is a hold-over from when people used to part in the blessing, "God be with you." Try bringing that back and see if people aren't blessed by your parting from them with a blessing!

The reality is, those around us who don't believe in Jesus know that we do. And they will probably not be surprised or put off by hearing our faith in Christ more overtly in our conversation. Since they know we claim him for our best friend, how strange is it if we never talk about our friend with them? People get to know about the other people who are close to us in our lives simply from our mentioning them in our normal conversation. We don't always have to say, "Let me introduce you to my grandmother who is a wonderful woman." They will learn about our grandmother and what she means to us from hearing us talking about going to her house over Thanksgiving, or about our conversation on the phone the other day.

In the same way, we don't have to start with a "let me introduce you to Jesus" conversation. Let others get to know Jesus and he comes up in our regular conversation.

Of course, there is still a time for "putting it all together." God in his mercy provides opportunities where people will be open to hearing the whole story of Christ, and we should not shrink back from that time. However, there is much seed planting that can be done before that day comes.

In Christ,

- Pastor Brandon



Summary of the Deacons & Elders Meeting January 9, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 5:49 p.m. Present were Brandon Current, Donnie McKinley, Dave McGraw, and Larry Dowden. The meeting was opened in prayer by Brandon Current. Meeting minutes from December 14, 2017, were reviewed and approved. The Financial Reports were reviewed and approved. It was decided to publish a quarterly financial report of the bolded items in the Financial Report and Fund Account Totals in the Encourager.

The Worship Team reported that eight people went caroling.

A review of the updated Maintenance & Repairs and Approved List was done. Elevator inspection was completed tonight, and the application of operation will be sent.

Missions reported that LGCA sent a request for funds for the new dining hall.

Brandon gave a report of his activities. With Brandon's help the Deacons and Elders are planning to update the HCC membership list to reflect current involvement at HCC. Brandon requested and received approval to attend the Gospel conference in Louisville, KY April 11-13, 2018.

The work on the new projectors for the sanctuary is scheduled for early in February and will require two days to complete.

There was no new business to discuss.

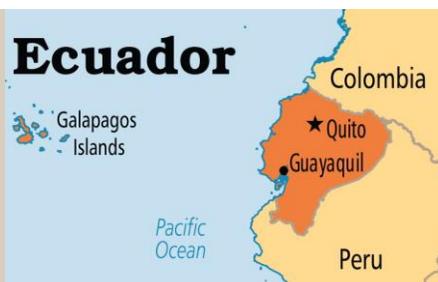
The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m. and closed in prayer by Dave McGraw.

Mission of the Month

Message of Life Ministries

Bill and Karleen Crandall

The Crandall family has been working in Ecuador since April 1990 in the area of church planting and now leadership training. They worked in the Dominican Republic for nearly five years before coming to Ecuador.



Guayaquil, with over 3 million people, was chosen for its size, growth rate, and also the receptivity of its people.

Guayaquil, where we presently minister, is on the Pacific coast of South America and often remembered for its heat and humidity. Ecuador, named for the equator which runs through it, is bordered by Colombia to the north and Peru to the south.

The People targeted for church planting are middle-class inhabitants of Guayaquil. Many people are self-employed while others are accountants, teachers, managers, office personnel, or taxi drivers. Most work very hard to raise their standard of living and that of their children. Ecuadorians have a nominal Roman Catholic background although many are not actively practicing Catholicism. Most Catholics place an emphasis on praying to Mary and a myriad of saints in order to procure good luck in the areas of relationships, finances, and health.

Our Purpose is to plant culturally relevant churches among urban Ecuadorians by presenting the Gospel in an understandable way with the desire of persuading and nurturing them to be committed followers of Jesus Christ, gathering and organizing them under Ecuadorian leadership.

Progress is being made among the 3 million people of Guayaquil. There are presently five churches in varying stages of development: "Los Samanes" which began "Las Orquideas", "La Fuente" which started "Los Vergeles", and "Torre Fuerte". The churches are working hard in the areas of discipleship and leadership training, and each congregation has four or more men that rotate preaching.

The Challenge is to prepare, teach and motivate the Ecuadorians to plant more congregations.

All for HIM,

Bill and Karleen Crandall

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February 2018

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-----------|-----------------------------------|---|--|-----------|--------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 11:45 a.m. 1st Sunday Potluck | 5 | 6 | 7 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study 7:00 p.m. The Potter's Kids | 8 Food Pantry Preparation Day 5:30 p.m. Deacons/Elders Meeting followed by Spiritual Focus Meeting | 9 | 10 10:00 Food Pantry |
| 11 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School | 12 | 13 | 14 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study 7:00 p.m. The Potter's Kids | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School | 19 | 20 9:00 a.m. Ladies Aid | 21 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study 7:00 p.m. The Potter's Kids | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School | 26 | 27 | 28 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 7:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study 7:00 p.m. The Potter's Kids | February Birthdays Jason Collins 2/3 Minnie Wise 2/3 Dave McGraw 2/4 Floranne Whalen 2/4 Randy Siebert 2/6 Lyne Waller 2/10 Brandon Anderson 2/17 Linda Kearfott 2/19 Keri Shepherd 2/22 | | |