

Tell It On The Mountain

Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church 559-683-6742 August 2005

Dear Friends,

How free is Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church? Are there ways in which we as a church are limited from being all that we can be in Christ?

How free is God to work among us in the power of His Spirit to reconcile, heal and transform lives?

Sundays we have been considering ways by which we can grow in freedom in Christ as individuals. How might this apply to our life corporately?

First of all, what does freedom in Christ mean for a church family? The responses to this question could be many, but I will limit my thoughts to this: To the extent that Sierra Vista is free in Christ any observer will see tangible evidence among us of “affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity... a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people... [involvement] in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.....” (Galatians 5:22-23, The Message)

What is necessary for the “fruit of the Spirit” to mature among us?

Essentially, part of the answer to that question points toward application of the steps to freedom in Christ:

- Counterfeit versus Real—To what extent do we function truly as the Body of Christ in self-sacrificial love? (I Corinthians 12-13)
- Deception versus Truth—How well does the way we live reflect the values of the Kingdom of God as spoken in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount? (Matthew 5-7)
- Bitterness versus Forgiveness—How fully do we forgive one another for offenses? (II Corinthians 2:10-11) And how quickly do we seek reconciliation with those we have offended? (Matthew 5:23-24)
- Rebellion versus Submission—How readily do we submit our hearts to those who are given responsibility to govern the church and the state? (I Peter 2:13-17)
- Pride versus Humility—How well do we relate to each other in humility, considering others better than ourselves? (Philippians 2:1-13)
- Bondage versus Freedom—Are there areas of our corporate and individual lives which are outside the control of the Spirit of Jesus? (Ephesians 5:18-21)

Of course, there are many other factors to consider, but as the above are taken seriously Sierra Vista will continue to become more and more the church that Jesus Christ has designed us to be. And what better way can there be to prepare for a new Pastor?

Grateful to be growing with you,

Rick Irish, Interim Pastor

ALPHA COURSE LEADER/HELPER TRAINING

Sierra Vista is very pleased to host a one-day training event for the Alpha Course **Saturday, August 6th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

The **Alpha** course is a ten-week practical introduction to the Christian faith. It is designed primarily for non-churchgoers and those who have recently become Christians. Pastor Chet Gallagher, Regional Director for Alpha USA Bay Area will be coming to do the training and churches from the Fresno area are also being invited. This is an extraordinary opportunity for us at Sierra Vista. Anyone who is interested in this course is invited to come.

Cost is \$20 and includes lunch and materials payable the day of the event - checks should be made out to “AlphaUSA”. Please RSVP to Ed Swenson at 286-8095 or ed.swenson@gmail.com.

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SESSION NOTES AND VOTES
July 19, 2005

IT WAS NOTED...

- Average attendance June 26-July 17 was 430.
- Staff evaluations will be done August 7 – 16. Staff interviews will be held August 25.
- An area Alpha Course Leader/Helper Training session for the Fresno area will be held at Sierra Vista on August 6, 2005. Potential leaders are encouraged to attend. Contact **Ed Swenson**, Alpha Director at alpha@FirstPres or call at 559-286-8095 to register.
- The playground will be locked for security purposes. Contact **Joan Yeatts** if you wish to have supervised play in the area.

IT WAS VOTED...

- To approve the minutes of the regular session meeting on 7-21-05 as presented.
- To appoint an Ad Hoc Committee composed of co-chairs **Betty Strain and Don Pettingill** to update the Policy Handbooks each July.
- To approve for baptism on July 31, 2005 at Bass Lake: **Dylan Demers, Doane Meyers, Tom Novak, Shelby Pisel, Jordon Rose, Bailey Setaro, and Scott Smith.**
- To receive the June 2005, Statement of Operations and the General Checking Account report as presented.
- To keep the same outside/inside worship schedule until Labor Day, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty L. Strain, Clerk of Session

PNC UPDATE:

Hello, Sierra Vista family. Sometimes, God will speak to us in ways that we don't expect. In fact, the PNC was pleasantly surprised at how God spoke to us through our two meetings on July 20 & 21. The result is that we have narrowed our field of candidates for our head pastor position to **3**.

Now, our job will be to go hear these candidates preach, and to spend a little more time with them, as soon as we can coordinate their schedules with those of most of the PNC. We will probably narrow it to two after that, and then hear them preach again and conduct more formal, in-person interviews.

There is a light at the end of the tunnel and it is the light provided by our God and Father as He illuminates our path before us! Praise be to Him! Please continue to pray for His will to be done as we near the end of our search process!

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

August Event: Potluck and Boat Ride

Have you heard how much fun the "Seniors" have at their events? It's true! Please join us at the **August Potluck and Boar Ride** at the home of Bob & Dorothy Miller at Bass Lake on Saturday at **3 p.m. August 13th**. You'll find the best food at these events, and we'll have 3 boats available for taking a fun run around the lake.

For more information, please call Dorothy Miller, 760-9034. Sign up on the patio following worship.



Event: "My Fair Lady"

We're going to Roger Rocka's Theatre Sunday, **September 18th** for Sunday Brunch and The Good Company Players production of "My Fair Lady." We'll leave the church right after the 9 a.m. worship service. Doors open at 11 a.m. Cost is \$36.50 per person for the buffet brunch including tip.

Sign ups will be taken through the end of August.

Call Pat Kruse at (209)742-4432.

AUGUST YOUTH I



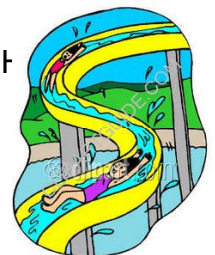
Sr. High

- Aug. 4 Day Hike to Jackass Lake
- Aug 7-13 Calvin Crest Sr. High Camp
- Aug. 18 Fresno Dome Overnighter
- Aug. 3 & 17 Youth Group
- Aug. 7, 14, 28 Bible Study

Call Ryan McKenzie @ 683-1341

Jr. High

- Aug. 1-6 Calvin Crest Jr. H
- Aug. 12 Water Park Day
- Aug. 7, 14, 28 Cocoa Mobile
- Aug. 9, 16 Youth Group



Call Nellie McKenzie @ 683-1336

MISSIONS TRENDS

Missions the way IT USED TO BE

Missionaries ...

- are career missionaries
- are called to a geographical location
- speak in churches and people automatically give \$\$\$
- are encouraged to go by their families
- have a strong sense of a missionary call
- do deputation
- send out prayer letters
- go to far away places
- sacrifice everything, including family life
- wear cast offs and hand-me-down clothing, formal
- are heroes on a pedestal
- have minimal higher education
- work mostly alone
- have stories about bugs and snakes
- show slides
- are mostly families with lots of children or single gals

The church ...

- is loyal to the mission agency
- supports lots of missionaries for small amounts
- doesn't ask too many questions
- is satisfied with a once-every-four-year visit
- frequently allows a missionary a Sunday to preach
- manages missions with the same structure as 1950
- functions primarily as the paymaster
- allows candidates to seek their own agency choice

The people ...

- give \$\$\$ out of duty, obligation, & loyalty
- glorify the missionary task
- believe missions is "over there"
- want glory stories
- feel separated from their missionaries
- pray for their missionaries
- have a strong missions tradition

Missions the way IT IS

Missionaries ...

- start with terms two years or less
- are called to a strategic ministry or people group
- build relationships and people join their team
- are discouraged from going by their families
- have a strong sense of obedience and opportunity
- do partnership development and fund raising
- send e-mail, voice mail, faxes, and videos
- look for strategic placement, near or far
- put ministry priorities in a larger perspective
- wear the same clothes as others, casual
- are equal fellow-members of the local body
- have maximal job-appropriate training
- work mostly in teams
- have stories about spiritual warfare
- show videos
- are mostly singles and second-career families

The church ...

- is loyal to its own purposes
- supports fewer missionaries for large amounts
- desires strong accountability
- wants large participation during "home service"
- rarely give a missionary a Sunday service to preach
- has radically restructured missions for the 1900s
- functions in support at all levels
- guides and directs the choice of mission agency

The people ...

- give \$\$\$ out of impact, results, & relationships
- understand missions is the natural result of worship
- believe missions is everywhere
- want results
- feel together with their missionaries
- pray with their missionaries
- have little or no specific missions tradition

This is the sixth in a series of 6 articles written by Gene Johnston to encourage us to get "into the Word" of God and make it an integral part of our lives.

FROM THE LORD'S TABLE: Part 6

SCRIPTURE: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."
(Galatians 2:20) [NKJV]

TITLE: The life I [ego-centric I] cannot live, BUT Christ can and desires to live through me!

Ionea and I, (together), were just recently reading a book by Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King entitled; "Experiencing God." Our Women's Bible Study Group has been using it on Wednesday mornings. While reading this with Ionea, I was really drawn to the clearly stated goal that God has for every man, women, boy, and girl. Here is how Mr. Blackaby states it in his "Introduction" opening paragraph:

"Have you ever wanted to know and do God's will? Those who come to Jesus as Savior and Lord join in His mission to reconcile a lost world. God Himself causes you to desire to be a faithful servant. Yet God has far more in store for your life than just to do something for Him. He wants you to experience an intimate love relationship with Him that is real and personal. Jesus said: "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." [John 17:3] [pg. 1]

Mr. King in his "Preface" to the book writes of how Mr. Blackaby got to him.

"Henry's teaching caught my attention. He said that we do not find God's will -- it is revealed. God always takes the initiative." also, "I studied the Scriptures. I prayed that God would teach me about Himself and His ways through experience, not just theory. My life turned into an exciting adventure. My path of ministry has not always been so thrilling." [pg. x]

This time of reading together caused me to reflect into my past. Please bear with me as I share a time of self, failure, and surrender.

The year was 1952, and I was in the USAF and soon to be discharged. I was dating a young lady and we agreed to get married. But, before that happened we found she was with child. We had to get married. I was discharged at the end of the year. I could not find a job at the base in the only thing

available to my training. So we moved to Los Angeles where there was aircraft work available at Douglas Aircraft.

It was not too long until I became very busy working and going to Jr. College. The weekends were all about my friends at work and my poor wife was all alone many hours a day. Then the baby came and all the new responsibilities. She went home to visit several times in the following months. She was young and this was the first time away from home. She was lonely. We did attend a little church near our apartment, but we did not get involved in any of the studies or programs. So after a year and a half she left never to return and took our daughter with her. I visited on weekends. Finally after several arguments, and the daughter crying each time, I was putting the daughter to bed and I just prayed asking the Lord to take care of her, as there was nothing else I could do.

I was crushed. Both of our mothers were Christians and were praying for us. We talked about getting help, but she did not want to pursue it for any reasons. Defeated again. After a few months she asked for a divorce. I really struggled with that because of teachings of the past, like "one life, one wife!" She then told me she had an earlier marriage annulled. With this I reasoned that she was not mine anyway so I went ahead and got the uncontested divorce. It was final sometime in 1955.

I was devastated, and alone. Many thoughts went through my head in those days. Even ending it all. A real time of despair. THEN, I received a letter from my Mother and in it was a little sentence she always put in somewhere. If she forgot it in the body of the letter, she would add it as a P.S. The sentence read: "Are you reading the Word?" Well I wasn't so I would pick up my Bible. Now, this Bible I received in 1937 back in Des Moines, Iowa, when I was promoted from Primary department to the Junior department. I would stick in my thumbs somewhere, open it and read a chapter. I could then say to her as I sent an answer, YES I'm reading the Word. BUT, this time it was Matthew 11 and the last three verses read: vv.28-30 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." I read this May 14, 1955.

I picked up my Bible and went into the bedroom. There, placing the Bible on the bed, I knelt and confessed to our Heavenly Father that I had really sinned against Him, heaven and earth. I desired in the very depth of my soul to repent and ask Christ to not only be my Savior but the

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Lord of my life. No rockets went off, no bells rang, no music, but a peace came over me that I had not known in some time. (years maybe) However, the next morning as I left for work the sky seemed bluer, the grass seemed greener, and the birds seemed to sing more melodic and there truly was a peace in my soul.

What a blessing He gave to me in that new day with Him. I went the following Sunday to the little church that we had attended and committed myself to the Lord's work. The rest, (50 years) has been a time of challenges and blessings. A time of hurts and a time of growing. Ionea and I (now that is another story), however, have truly had a time of blessing and growing as the Lord is maturing us both, to His Glory. "Just an aside." My favorite hymn is "TO GOD BE THE GLORY."

BACK to the present and the reality of our Heavenly Father. Rick Warren in his Book "The Purpose Driven Live" entitles his "Day 10 - The Heart of Worship." He chooses Romans 6:13 (TEV) "Give yourselves to God - Surrender your whole being to Him to be used for righteous purposes." He also states near the bottom of the page; "It is the natural response to God's amazing love and mercy." (pg. 77)

I recommend a reading of Pastor Rick Warren's book - but especially "DAY 10", and most especially "PAGE 83" Pastor Warren notes:

"A. W. Tozer said, "The reason why many are still troubled, still seeking, still making little forward progress is because they haven't yet come to the end of themselves. We're still trying to give orders, and interfering with God's work within us." (pg. 79)

Then in closing Day 10 Pastor Warren asks: "**Question to Consider:** What area of my life am I holding back from God?" (pg. 84)

Now, coming full circle, in Mr. Blackaby and Mr. King's book "Experiencing God" (chapter 3) "Doing God's Will," we find this;

"**SUMMARY:** God is far more interested in a love relationship with you to love Him. As He fills you with His presence, He will guide you to do things. But even as you do those things, He will be the One at work through you to accomplish His purposes. He is all you need. The Christ in you is your way. He is your "map." When you follow His leadership one day at a time, you will always be right in the middle of God's will for your life."

IN CLOSING: God's Word says in Eph. 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." [NKJV]

And again God's Word says in Col. 1:26-27 "the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." [NKJV]

It is my prayer that this series of articles has challenged you to get serious. Yes, seeking the intimate love relationship with our Heavenly Father. Totally depending on the Holy Spirit for daily discernment. May our Lord Jesus Christ Bless you richly in your commitment.

gene j.



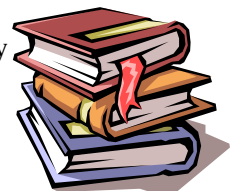
A NOTE FROM THE LIBRARIAN

For those of you who love Karen Kingsbury, try the new books in the Library by Linda Nichols – "At The Scent Of Water", "If I Gained The World." Also, Karen Kingsbury has two new books out – "Fame" (the first in a new series) and "A Thousand Tomorrows." Enjoy!

P.S. Jean Thibodeaux just donated a new book by Gracia Burnham (former missionary in the Philippines) "To Fly Again."

NEW BOOKS IN THE CHURCH LIBRARY

"Beyond The Blue" by Leslie Gould
 "In Her Steps" by Denise Siino
 "The Purse-Driven Life" by Anita Renfroe
 "At The Scent Of Water" and "If I Gained The World" by Linda Nichols
 "Window To The world" by Susan Meissner
 "Deep Dixie" and "Snowbirds" by Annie Jones
 "The Fires Of Autumn" by Robert Funderburk
 "Opal" by Lauraine Snelling
 "Experiencing God" by Henry Blackaby
 "Tempest In A Teapot" by Judy Baer
 "Breakers Reep" by Terri Blackstock
 "God's Gift" by Dee Henderson
 "Monster" by Frank Peretti
 "It Couldn't Just Happen" by Lawrence Richards
 "To Fly Again" by Gracia Burnham



SERMONS ONLINE

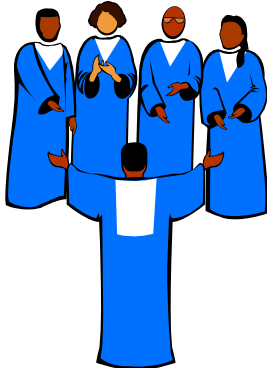
Weekly sermons are now available on our church website:
www.sierravistachurch.org.
 If you miss a Sunday just log on and listen.

If you would like a copy of the sermon on CD, they are available by contacting the church office at 683-6742.



**SIERRA SINGERS BEGIN
 REHEARSALS THE END OF AUGUST!**

All interested singers - old, new, returning from a hiatus, or just those who want to give church choir a try - are invited to the first rehearsal of the fall season on Wednesday, August 31 at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. It is exciting to start participating in worship again, and our first time to sing will be the 9:00 worship service on September 11.



Please join us for the two Wednesdays before, August 31 and September 7 to prepare. Those of us who sing regularly in the Sierra Singers have heard many good voices in the congregation singing hymns and praise songs. You are the ones who will be welcomed to join us to sing special music and to lead the congregation in worship music. You may call the director, Catherine Walker, for more information - 658-7376.

MOUNTAIN ARTS CHORALE PERFORMS IN OUR SANCTUARY ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 26 AT 7 P.M. & SUNDAY, AUGUST 28 AT 2:30 P.M.

Gifts for our children

There are many gifts we can give our children:

1. *The gift of oneself as a very loving father or mother.*
2. *The gift of being available for counsel, guidance and encouragement.*
3. *The gift of a spiritual foundation by affirming God, praying with and for the children.*
4. *The gift of showing sympathy for the poor, handicapped, ill, unemployed, persecuted and others.*
5. *The gift of being an example in seeking justice for all, being completely fair in dealing with others and being truthful at all times.*
6. *The gift of being a good steward of time, talent and possessions.*
7. *The gift of showing how to keep debt to a minimum and savings to the maximum.*
8. *The gift of keeping one's life in balance so that no activity, such as work, prohibits family activities.*
9. *The gift of discipline in terms of eating, exercising, reading, doing home chores and worshipping together.*
10. *The gift of humor, enabling fun and joyfulness to be a prominent part of family life.*

- Charles Ferrell





August 2005



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7 p.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m. Stephen Ministers	2 10 a.m. Attendance 7 p.m. Prayer Tm 7 p.m. Mission Tm 7 p.m. Jr. High Group	3 10 a.m. Staff Mtg. 4:30 p.m. Bells Reh. 7 p.m. Sr. High Group	4 Sr. High Hike 6:30 p.m. Worship Team	5 Sierra Vista's Day Of Prayer For Pres Church (USA)	6 10 a.m. - 4p.m. ALPHA Training
7 Worship 9, & 10:45 a.m. Communion & 6 p.m.	Senior High to Calvin Crest Summer Camp 12					13 3 p.m. Seniors Potluck & Boat Ride at Bass Lake
14 Worship 9, & 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m.	15 7 p.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m. Stephen Ministers	16 10 a.m. Attendance 6:30 p.m. Session 7 p.m. Jr. High Group	17 10 a.m. Staff Mtg. 4:30 p.m. Bells Reh. 6:30 p.m. PNC 7 p.m. Sr. High Group	18 Sr. High Campout at Fresno Dome	19	20
21 Worship 9, 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m.	22 7 p.m. Boy Scouts 7 p.m. Stephen Ministers	23 10 a.m. Attendance 7 p.m. Jr. High Group	24 10 a.m. Staff Mtg. 4:30 p.m. Bells Reh. 6:30 p.m. PNC 7 p.m. Sr. High Group	25	26	27 7 a.m. Men's Breakfast
28 Worship 9, 10:45 a.m. & 6 p.m.	29 7 p.m. Boy Scouts	30 10 a.m. Attendance 7 p.m. Jr. High Group	31 10 a.m. Staff Mtg. 4:30 p.m. Bells Reh. 6:30 p.m. PNC 7 p.m. Sr. High Group			

Sunday

5 p.m. Study on Philip Yancey's book "Reaching For The Invisible God" led by John Ramsey in the Parent's Room. Call 642-3152
1st and 3rd Sunday evenings Bible Study at Dave & Linda Pound's home. Call 683-3365

Tuesday

9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study in Coarsegold led by Betty Erford. Call 658-8139.

Wednesday

9:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study led by Gene Johnston in the Parent's Room. Call 692-2711.

Saturday

7 a.m. Promise Keeper Men's Bible Study led by John Ramsey in the Chapel. Call 642-3152.

Join A

Bible Study Group

