



Bethel News

APRIL 2017

Faith Story - Andrew Florestano



*“Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” Ephesians 4:15*

Our Christian fellowship so often seems to be a

balancing act, where we constantly try to avoid two extremes in our relationships. On one hand, we could forgo speaking truth in our relationships, and so allow sinful tendencies to live unchecked in our brothers and sisters. On the other hand, it would be easy for us to come down hard on sin in other believers, but without love, and so alienate the very people we are trying to build community with.

A few weeks ago, I was riding in the car with a friend I'd been getting to

know a lot more over the past school year. Our conversation was pretty relaxed, talking about a lot of different things and joking the night away. But at one point during the conversation, my friend made a hurtful joke about someone else in our ministry. I laughed for a second, and then stopped. Just then I felt the Holy Spirit nudging me, causing me to think *“Maybe I need to talk to him about this.”*

Now anyone who knows me knows that I'm a huge people-pleaser, Continued on page 2...

Robertson's Ramblings— Go and Do Good

It has been my prayer throughout our time going through 1 Peter that God will use it in your life to help you know God more and grow more into the likeness and image of Jesus Christ. There is much to reflect on as a result of our time

in 1 Peter. We need to reflect on who we are in Christ. We need to reflect on how because of our faith in Christ we need to live our lives here as strangers and aliens, as chosen outcasts. We need to re-

flect on how we are to think about suffering and what we are to do in the midst of our suffering. All were prominent themes throughout the book of 1 Peter but the one theme that keeps coming back to mind is Peter's call in the

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Faith Story (continued from page 1)

meaning I don't like to upset the stability of any relationship I have with people. It's difficult for me to bring up tough subjects with friends and family, fearing that speaking the honest truth could ruin my relationships. I tend towards speaking love more than truth. But at this moment, the Spirit was very clear in telling me to step out in faith and speak truth to my brother in Christ.

So after a few moments

of debating whether or not to say anything, I said to my friend, "You know, that seems like a pretty mean-spirited thing to say about that person." And what followed was one of the most fruitful, life-giving conversations I've ever had with him, where we both got to be vulnerable in sharing our struggles in loving people well. And even though I feared a rift in our relationship, that conversation has really served

to grow the friendship between us.

I know that I still tend towards fear and uncertainty in my relationships, but I trust that God will continue to conform my thoughts and actions to look more like Jesus, and that the Spirit will keep convicting me to grow in boldness and love in my fellowship.

Ministry Highlight—Connections

The Connections Ministry Team seeks to show intentional hospitality to every guest sent to Bethel. We believe every person who comes through our Bethel Baptist doors does not come through haphazardly. God has given us the privilege to cooperate with Him to help move every guest forward in their journey with Jesus. We would like to take a deeper, more active role in developing relationships and helping our guests become fully engaged members at Bethel. We are working on an organizational system to help strengthen our Bethel family,

both with guests, regular attenders and members.

In order to better track our guests' visits to Bethel, we are hopeful that all regular attenders and guests will complete Connect cards every Sunday morning. Connect cards are very helpful for contact information and follow up as well as information regarding interest in serving at Bethel and event signups.

We are organizing Dine-outs again (as we enjoyed several years ago) every quarter to serve as an opportunity for connection between our guests and regular attenders. We hope all

families/singles will take this opportunity to host and/or attend these casual get-togethers to build relationships in our Bethel family.

We are also looking for regular attenders at Bethel who would be willing to sit with our guests for their first, second and third visits for the purpose of helping our guests feel comfortable, directing to restrooms or nursery and being available to answer any questions about Bethel they may have.

We have pur-

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Elder Report —Partners



EXALTING · EQUIPPING · EVANGELIZING

In the book of Philippians, Paul writes with fervor and affection to those in the Philippian church for their partnership in the gospel. Serving in the work at Bethel that God calls us to do creates the possibility for great bonds of fellowship and affection.

I invite you to be a **“Partner in the Gospel”** and experience the love and joy of which Paul speaks. Here is a short list of some upcoming opportunities. They all begin with the common thread of **Prayer Partnership** for

God to work in us and through what He calls us to be doing.

Easter. This sacred holiday presents an amazing opportunity for youth and others to share in the Good Friday service. Easter is an even more amazing opportunity to talk to others about the incredible message of hope and the power of the resurrection, and to invite them to Bethel.

Search team. This team is hard at work and we need to join them in praying for the fruit of their labor and for God’s choice for our next associate pastor.

Haiti team. Our Bethel team of 15 people, representing all of us, is meeting monthly and pre-

paring for serving June 2-10. There are partnership opportunities through giving, attending a benefit pancake feed after church on April 9th, making clothes (more information coming from Mindy Metzger about this), becoming a prayer partner with one of the 15, and writing encouragement letters in advance for team members to open when they are in Haiti.

Summer VBS. Work is beginning to plan for this outreach to children and families. See Pastor Josh to find how you can serve.

District youth camp, July 2-9. Pastor Josh will be the camp pastor this year. There are key opportunities to pray

for him and our youth, encourage youth to attend, assist with finances, and attend a parking lot sendoff for those going.

More. Interested in partnering elsewhere in the church such as MOPS, worship team, connection team, men’s or women’s ministry? We would love your partnership and look forward to testimonies of growing bonds of fellowship and affection.

Robertson’s Ramblings (continued from page 1)

midst of all those truths that we are to seek to do good as elect exiles.

That is a striking call with the realization that Peter is writing to a group of Christian who were being ostracized and marginalized by the wider society as a direct result of their faith in Jesus Christ. The call Peter gave them was not to protest, not to withdraw, not to fight to gain more influence within wider society. Peter’s primary calling was telling them to go and do good. I wonder if we don’t miss

many opportunities to make an impact because we are too focused on fighting for influence and importance, instead of simply doing good.

My prayer is that all of us would seek ways to do good as a result of our faith in Jesus Christ. When you think about your sphere of influence where can you be doing good? Think about in your home, in your neighborhood, in your work-place, and in Brookings as a whole asking God to help you see opportunities to

do good! What are those areas of overlap where our society says something is good and the Bible agrees is good that you are aware of? Focus in there and do good there!

So what good is God calling you to do? Pray, decide, pray again, and than go do good! Praying alongside you that God would allow of all us regular opportunities to do abundant good as chosen exiles living temporarily in Brookings, SD. Then let’s work to encourage one-another to continue doing

good. May it become common conversation at Bethel where we are sharing with one another opportunities to do good, and encouraging one another not to grow weary in doing good. We as a family of brothers and sisters in Christ have the opportunity and the responsibility to be encouraging one another to live as elect exiles while doing abundant good.

Faith and Work— Volker Brozel

Tell us about the work you do.

I work at SDSU where I try to teach and do research on bacteria and how they grow and function. The path to my career was not my initial choice, a road of twists and turns on which Jesus took me. I have had the phenomenal privilege of being allowed to study living systems and how they function. It's like "peeking behind the closed curtain" as the pre-war German theologian Karl Heim called it. I enjoy being able to share these intricacies of growing and expanding life with students, especially in the laboratory setting. It is so cool when you see something come alive, something connect in a student's mind and they experience a sort of mental growth spurt. Observing growth is so exhilarating – maybe because the cosmos (aka creation) of the Christ is growing, developing, expanding; never static.

More recently I am responsible for leading the Biology-Microbiology department. Officially that involves responsibility for the course offerings, managing the budget, and responsibility for the overall infrastructure, but above all its about trying to shape an environment in

which students and professors can learn, discover and grow.

What are some of the issues you face in your work?

Let me share two here:

Department head in a university is a bit of an Advil job; dealing with the headaches that life brings with it. On any given day that could be a student that cheated, conflict between people, or another budget cut. In Gen 3 we are told that: "cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;". Somehow there are seldom enough hours to get everything done and everyone happy. There are never sufficient resources to give our students the quality experience they should get. The only tools I have are the faith that Jesus came to redeem, to heal, to bring together what does not want to belong together. He does open doors I could never imagine, and bring solutions I never dreamed of!

A second area of challenge involves the very core of my field – understanding how living systems grow and develop. There is so much known today, with so

much precision, but because it's so intricate it's hard to get it across to newcomers. As a young student and Christian I realized that I could not be like the opponents of Copernicus and Galileo, and refuse to look through the telescope and so avoid admitting that the earth is in fact not the center of the universe. In short, the path of discovery of how Jesus' mystery of life came to be has been astounding, filled with "ooh and ah" moments. Some feel this astounding when they marvel at a sunrise, but I rejoice when I consider the unfathomable complexity of the expression of Jesus – as pointed to in John 1 and Colossians 1. Both John and Paul articulated so well that everything in existence is the expression of the "Logos", the Christ. The hardest part for me is that my Christian brothers largely reject our current understanding of creation, and instead believe in a literal six-day creation view. This is an area that I would welcome conversations.

Does your faith make a difference to how you deal with these issues?

The honest answer is that it depends on the

day. Here's how I think it should work: I believe the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus was about more than replacing the killing of an ox. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth he invoked Isaiah announcing a new time of healing, of touching his creation. Paul speaks about bringing together what does not belong together. When we pray "thy kingdom come" I think we are asking that Jesus be present, and by his presence do what Jesus does so well; which is to touch, heal, redirect and reconcile. In practice this means that Jesus wants me to invite him into my work, into the headaches and shortages, and to trust him that he can work to heal and provide. If I believe him, he draws me into his work. Some call that hands and feet. Why is it so easy for me to snap out of this awareness and try to do it alone?

How would you like us to pray for you and your ministry in the workplace?

I do not regard my work as a "ministry". Claiming a "ministry" would lead straight into the trap Jesus called the left hand (Mt 6:3). Rather I see work as a part of the call to follow Jesus and engage where he

Update from Associate Pastor of Family Ministries

Search Team

Wanted to take a moment to give an update to the congregation in regards to the search process for the Associate Pastor of Family Ministries position.

-The team has met several times to pray, set up a timeline, and to determine a rubric by which we can evaluate applications that come in.

-The Associate Pastor position is open and has been posted in numerous places including Converge Heartland District, Gospel Coalition website, as well as nu-

merous seminaries and Christian colleges.

-The deadline for applications to be submitted is March 31st.

-The pastoral search team is still working with the tentative timeline of having an associate pastor starting sometime in July.

-If you have someone in mind who you feel might be a good fit for the position feel free to share information about the position with those individuals.

-We would ask that you pray for the search team as we are beginning to meet and evaluate the applications that have come in thus far.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Brian Romsa who is chair of the search team.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and encouragement through this process.

Associate Pastor
Search Team

Ministry Highlight (continued from page 2)

chased totes to assist families with young children. Every Sunday we will place a children's bulletin and Bible coloring sheets with a package of crayons inside each tote. Children may pick up a tote before the church ser-

vice and complete the activities in the bulletin and coloring sheets and return the tote and the crayons at the close of the service.

We would love to hear suggestions from the Bethel family as to how we could help welcome our

guests and grow together as the Body of Christ. Please feel to share your suggestions with us.

Julie Underwood
Beth Bozied

Diane Kline
Peg Jordan

Aaron Prunty
Beth Niemeyer

Faith and Work (continued from page 4)

leads – if he turns my pathetic attempts into some salt and some light, that is a miracle of his working. So, if you choose to pray

for me, then please pray for humility, for the simple strength to trust Christ more than what I see.



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714 17th Ave S
Brookings, SD 57006

605-692-2858
bethel@brookings.net
bethelbaptistbrookings.org
Find us on Facebook!



Exalting His Name...
Equipping His People...
Evangelizing His World...

Upcoming Events

- 4/2 Messiah in the Passover
- 4/9 Haiti Pancake Feed
- 4/14 Good Friday
- 4/16 Easter Sunday
- 4/20 Women's 3G
- 4/21 Secret Church
- 4/23 Family Sunday School
- 4/30 Quarterly Business Meeting
- 5/5-5/6 Haiti Garage Sale Fundraiser
- 5/9 Senior Brunch
- 6/2-6/10 Haiti Mission Trip
- 6/19-6/23 VBS

Missions Focus - Jeremy & Trina Hamilton



Jeremy Hamilton serves with Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship as the South Dakota Director and Lakes and Plains Missions Specialist. The Lakes and Plains Regions encompasses SD, ND, MN, WI, and MI. He supervises the campuses of South School of Mine and Technology, Northern State University, Dakota State University,

and South Dakota State University. Hamilton is looking to replant a chapter at USD. While his ministry includes meeting with his campus staff, volunteers, and students, Hamilton also travels to other parts of the region for training conferences and leadership meetings. In addition to spending time on campus, he often meets with churches.

On January 27-29, Jeremy took part in the SD Winter Conference which was in Pierre, SD. This unique conference was run by a team of students from each of the chapters and again invited alumni to attend. Most recently, he reported that SD students served during Spring Break on the Pine Ridge Reservation and in Milwaukee bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hearts of service.

While the Hamiltons currently are based in Huron, SD, they began serving as staff directors at SDSU in the fall of 1999. During this time they attended Bethel,

and in 2008 we were honored to be their sending church as they transitioned to Belgium ministering for a couple of years. Following their time abroad, this family relocated to the Fargo/Moorhead area as regional directors.

Jeremy and Trina have four children, Elijah, Abby Kate, Natalie, and Lisbeth. They currently live in Huron as Jeremy travels across the region to campuses.