

# CURRENT

AT TAFT AVENUE COMMUNITY CHURCH



JANUARY 2011 VOLUME 13 ISSUE 1

## CHALLENGE TO MINISTER

*“Christianity has not so much been tried and found wanting, as it has been found difficult and left untried.”*

G.K. Chesterton’s famous line is found throughout Christian literature, yet it seems to contradict what Jesus said about His yoke and load—He said they were easy and light. Both Jesus and Chesterton were right. Whatever yoke you take in this life, you will carry difficulties. The question is, which yoke will you choose? Soren Kierkegaard said, “It costs a man just as much or even more to go to hell than

to come to heaven.” In the final analysis, the yoke of the world is exceedingly more difficult than the yoke of Christ. This brings us to the discipline that I want to address for the coming year—*simplicity*.

In Luke’s gospel (10:38-42), the story of Mary and Martha teaches us about simplicity. While her sister was busy listening to the Lord, Martha was busy making sure everything was perfect. So perfect and so focused, in fact, she ends up saying and thinking some things I’m sure she was em-

barrassed about later. She: (1) complains to the Lord that He does not care enough for her; (2) orders Him to direct her sister’s life (you can feel the tension in the room); and (3) publicly denounces her sister’s priorities—great fodder for family feuds! The business of life took its toll on Martha’s attitude and beliefs about God. Instead of condemning Martha, Jesus answers her lovingly, “You are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the (*Cont. on p. 4*)

## CALL TO WORSHIP

“Gifts Optional”

That’s always an interesting phrase on a party invitation. How do I determine whether or not to bring a gift? If I can afford it? If I want to? Will I feel guilty if I don’t bring a gift, only to realize that everyone else did? Am I to assume that the party giver is just as enthused by my mere presence as my presents? And what should I buy? What can they use? Too many questions! That’s

where Starbucks gift cards save the day!

Sometimes we go through the same set of questions in our minds on Sunday mornings. Should I stand? Should I sit? Kneel? Sing? Clap? Pretend I’m happy when I’m really not? I love God, but how do I show it? What will other people think of me if I...?

We know there is no “Praise Optional” sign in heaven, so

what’s the right frame of mind this side of glory? Think heavily about the cross, the blood, the pain, the suffering of Jesus, Him crucified—His gift for you. And then be glad, be thankful, rejoice, praise the Lord! And pour it out!

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:17, NIV)



## CONTRIBUTORS:

- *Challenge to Minister*  
Pastor Bob
- *Call to Worship*  
Ed Nilsen
- *Changing and Growing*  
Pastor Bob
- *Co-Laborers on the Field*  
Bill Petersen
- *Charting our Mission to Orange, India and the World*  
Steve Hicks
- *Charge to Action*  
Ministry Leaders

## CHANGING AND GROWING

*One week before Christmas, 30 TACC parishioners braved the rain to reach out to our neighbors and invite them to our Christmas Eve services. We visited 500-600 homes and had good conversations. I was encouraged by the turnout, and offer the following exhortation to continue our missional engagement.*



Living missionally in the United States isn't what it used to be. The bad news: biblical literacy is at an all-time low. However, the good news is that "spirituality" is in. Many people believe in something beyond their five senses. Nevertheless, Jesus as the "only-way-to-to-heaven brand" is definitely not PC, although He's still a pretty nice guy in most people's minds. The translation for evangelical churches today is that non-believers will not visit a church to try it on for size. Nobody has *the* answer to life's spiritual issues, so why would a Christian's answer be any better than mine. And besides that, churches are fairly stuffy.

WE SAY, "O NO, WE  
COULD *EVEN* BE  
KILLED." JESUS SAYS,  
"FEAR NOT, YOU CAN  
*ONLY* BE KILLED!"

With all this in mind, we must still obey the mandate in Matthew 28:16-20—go, preach, teach, and make disciples. The bottom line is that it looks like we are going to have to convert the heathen the old fashioned way—by proclaiming a radical message, living the fanatic's life of Jesus, and relying on the work of the Spirit. Fortunately, He is the Lord of the harvest and He has not left us instruction-less about living the "fanatic's" life. One of the most important works of the Spirit will be in our own lives as He prepares us to be the kind of people that others will listen to.

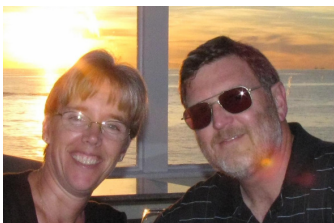
In Luke 12, Jesus provides solid motivations, means, and Christian lifestyle priorities so that His disciples can carry on His work effectively. Here are three:

1. Live transparently. **Be** the version of a real Christian who is the same on the outside as the inside (vv.1-3). This is very attractive to non-believers. Match the inside with the outside through confession, repentance, and forgiveness. There

are no perfect pastors or parishioners. We have no perfect neighbors. No perfect bosses. No perfect workers, carpenters, clerks, attorneys, doctors, businessmen, MBAs, engineers, librarians, teachers, computer geeks, administrators, secretaries, valets, mechanics, women, men, husbands, wives, students, children, translators, missionaries. Everybody knows it. The sooner we humble ourselves and recognize that the ground is level before the Cross, the sooner those outside the faith will want to come inside. The world is looking for changed people, not super people, and certainly not perfect people. Just people who have a reasonably good marriage, reasonably good kids, a reasonable hope, and a reason for life more than seeing the next weekend blockbuster.

2. Be in awe. Understand God's providential control, power, and justice (vv.4-5).

(Cont. on p. 3)



Jeri & Gloria Little

## CO-LABORERS ON THE FIELD

Looking back on the year 2010, Jeri and Gloria Little remain humbled and amazed at the Lord's provision for a seamless transition back to the States. Furthermore, it has been a year of almost unprecedented travel and groundbreaking moments. They remain forever grateful to all who have chosen to continue with them in partnership for the cause of

Christ. They pray that the seeds sewn in 2010 would bear much fruit in 2011 and beyond. Let's hold Jeri and Gloria in our prayers, especially as Jeri tells us of a fire at Little Texas.

"As if to underscore the biblical truth that, in fact, one day everything will be burned up in fire, Little Texas has experienced a flaming foretaste

of that reality. Thankfully, no one was injured. Two guest rooms and the hallway above the restaurant were destroyed. Additionally, the roof sustained significant damage. The attendant fire department water that extinguished the blaze also wrought havoc on the restaurant, kitchen and reception below. In the ashes, we choose joy; amidst the ruins,

(Cont. on p. 3)

## CHANGING AND GROWING CONTINUED

We say, "O no, we could *even* be killed." Jesus says, "Fear not, you can *only* be killed!" Don't fear man, fear God. This truth enables us to live "recklessly." It also breeds in us an attractive humility. Nobody likes a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pharisee, inside or outside the church. Fearing God will also quell the fear of being ostracized, enabling us to speak in the midst of peer pressure to stay quiet. God is our reason—

He alone is awesome.

3. Live securely. Come to grips with God's fantastic attentiveness and concern for you. God cares for sparrows—they are free and yet not forgotten (vv.6-7). God never promises safety from all ills; Revelation 6:9-11 provides ample evidence of that in John's futuristic picture of martyrdom. But He does promise a positive verdict for believers before His

judgment seat.

Transparency, reverent awe and security—spiritual food for spiritual work, so that, by the power of the Spirit and the proclamation of the gospel, all the nations will come to know Him.

## CHARTING OUR MISSION TO ORANGE, INDIA AND THE WORLD

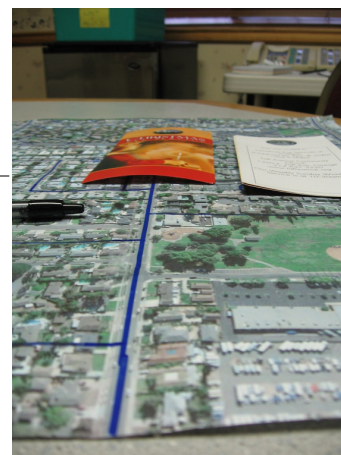
Your missions team continues to work on a long-term agreement with our friends at the Leadership Training Center in Siliguri, India. We have sent our suggestions to them and are awaiting their response. Our desire is to send teams to India twice in 2011. In addition to evangelizing and discipling, we want to also work on training indigenous church planters, who then go into villages and plant churches. We hope that this will have a domino effect, so that the area around Siliguri will not want for churches in their villages, nor for a church family with which to worship.

Amy Williams has been here in the USA since September, and her plan is to return in January to Italy to continue her ministry. Let's show Amy how much we appreciate her efforts before she leaves.

Bill Petersen and Mark Menashe continue their neighborhood outreach in the area around TACC. They have set a great example to follow as we gear up to reach one thousand homes near TACC in 2011.

Finally, as an outreach to our local friends, TACC conducted Christmas programs at the

Village in Orange on Saturday and Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend, with two performances each day. It was well attended by our church family, and by those shopping in the mall. Thanks to all of those involved in setting up the risers and sound system each day, and thanks to the singers as well. The kids were a particular blessing. Please pray that the music, and especially the words to the music will have a lasting impact on those who heard, that they may come to know the One of whom we sang as their personal and loving Savior.



## CO-LABORERS ON THE FIELD CONTINUED

we opt for celebration (James 1:2). At the same time, our entire staff is galvanized to extract what can be salvaged."

"Now the rebuilding begins. Our twenty-eight other hotel rooms remain open and we pray to get the restaurant operational in a few days. This is the Lord's best for us

this season. We pray to be worthy witnesses to our faith as we engage the community in the fire's aftermath. My task is to lead my flock forward while procuring all of the requisite replacement furnishings. This is an opportunity to recreate a part of Little Texas. We are committed to once again raising the

bar. Pray for us in the days ahead."

"IN THE ASHES, WE  
CHOOSE JOY;  
ADMIDST THE RUINS,  
WE OPT FOR  
CELEBRATION."

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COMMUNITY CHURCH  
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Orange, CA 92865  
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## CHALLENGE TO MINISTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (NASB).

The discipline of simplicity that Jesus calls Martha to adopt is also what Jesus calls us to—to evaluate, eliminate, and concentrate. What can you eliminate this year? Meetings? Movies? Television? Home improvements? Clothes shopping? As you assess your time commitments, remember what's most important. When asked why though so many people seem to wish to be great in God's eyes, so few are truly saintly, John Joseph Surin replied, "The chief reason is that they give too big a place in life to indifferent things." This month, ask yourself, "What consumes my thinking, my doing, my planning that will make no difference in the light of eternity, and how can I eliminate it from my life?" Then, enjoy the simplicity of the One whose yoke is easy and burden is light.

## CHARGE TO ACTION

### ***Leadership Committee Meeting***

Sunday, January 16, 4-6pm.

### ***About His Business***

Join us for the second half of our annual ministry meeting on Sunday, January 30th, at 6pm.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- *500-600 homes were invited to Christmas Eve services*
- *The fire at Little Texas catalyzes new opportunities to engage the community.*
- *Pray for those at the Village concert to come to know Christ.*
- *Evaluate, Eliminate, Concentrate*

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