

Current

A Taft Avenue Publication

September 2011 | Vol. 13 | Issue 8

*Equipping the church to reach the world
for the glory of God through Christ*

Through a Different Lens:
the Church

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Who are We?

By Pastor Bob

Biblical metaphors (figures of speech, word pictures of something tangible to help us understand something less tangible) are given by God to guide us through the process of discovering and living out our God-given roles, relationships and responsibilities. Here's a sampling of some word pictures that the Bible employs to help us understand the church:

- Body of Christ—the church is most frequently called this.
- Bride of Christ
- Temple of God or living stones
- Flock of sheep
- Household or family of God
- Pillar of the truth

I'd like to address the last one first. The others will follow later.

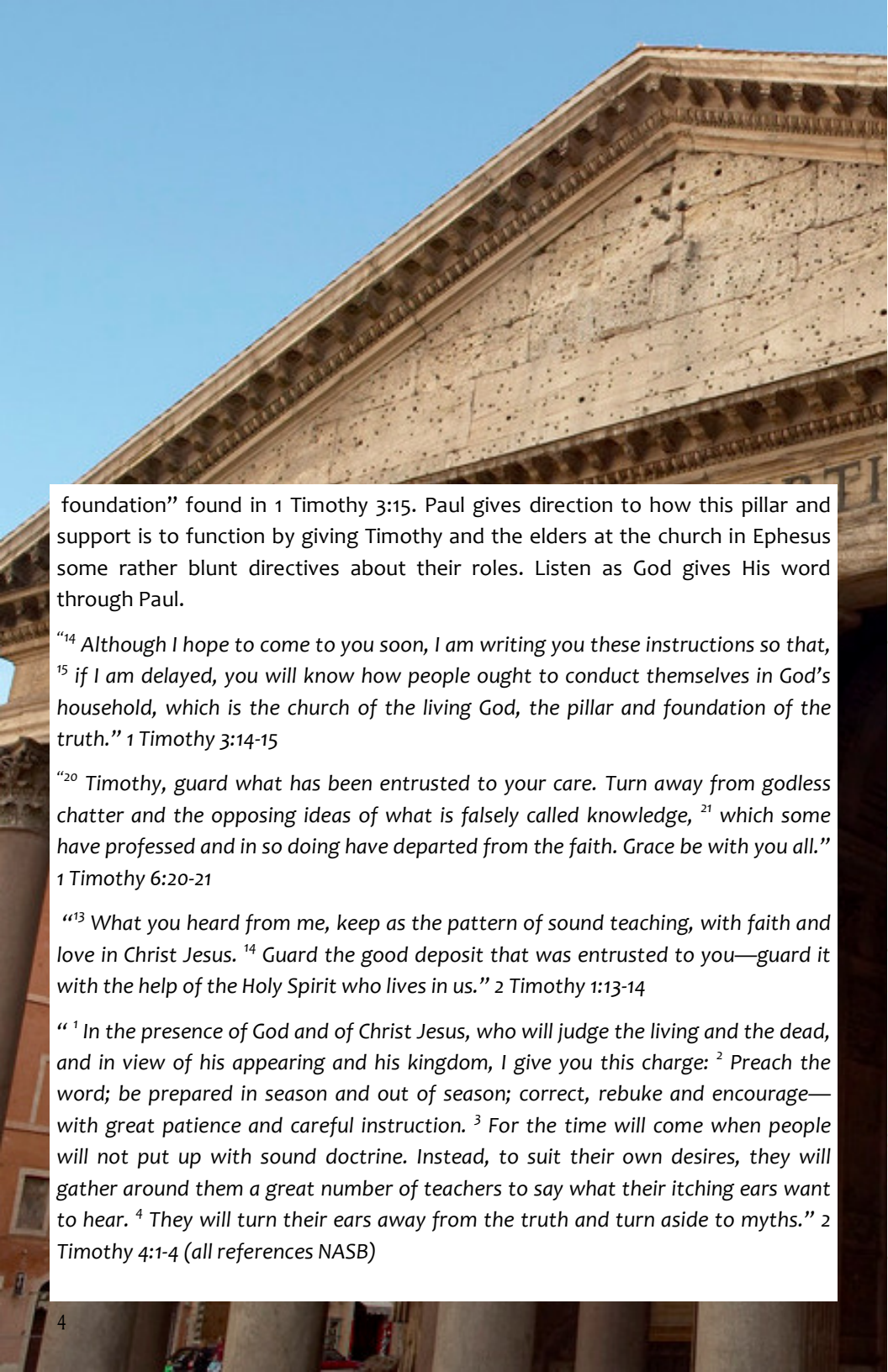
“The pillar and support of the truth.”

Let's begin with a comment on the second article of our Statement of Faith which addresses the Bible as God's Word without error:

“We are not orphans in an empty universe. This cosmos in which we live is not silent, for the God who created all things has spoken. The gospel message we proclaim is ‘according to the Scriptures,’ Paul says (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). It has been revealed to us authoritatively by God himself.” *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America.* p. 51

The gift that un-orphans us is the Word, the Word about God and Christ. The only true mooring in the universe is God's will and revelation of salvation in Christ, given authoritatively and definitively in our Bible—which, understandably, because of the powers of darkness that oppose our Jesus, will always be a contested battleground. From the Jesus Seminar (an active assault on the Four Gospels' record of the life of Christ) to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, the Bible as given to us by God is under fire. However, without this authoritative Word from above, we are lost in an abyss of orphaned moralisms and spiritual correctness. We must fight and stand strong.

It is no wonder that one of the metaphors used to refer to the church, a metaphor intended to help the church understand its role and function, is “pillar and



foundation” found in 1 Timothy 3:15. Paul gives direction to how this pillar and support is to function by giving Timothy and the elders at the church in Ephesus some rather blunt directives about their roles. Listen as God gives His word through Paul.

“¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.” 1 Timothy 3:14-15

“²⁰ Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹ which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.” 1 Timothy 6:20-21

“¹³ What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.” 2 Timothy 1:13-14

“¹ In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (all references NASB)



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The Word must be proclaimed to be protected. It must be read and studied; but not just for information's sake; it is given to be understood *and* obeyed. The Hebrew word for “hear,” *shema*, also means to obey. To hear is to obey. Without obedience, it is not supported and guarded. It must have a prominent place in our worship, our home groups and our families. Protection is not hiding it away, but proclaiming it, giving reasons to believe it, giving it carefully and completely to the coming generations, with deep conviction and labor—and obeying. The world will assail it; we must defend it. The world will have no interest in upholding it. It must be preached and taught, made available freely and fully. It must be used as the means to expose error, not with pointless generalities but specifically with warnings against false teachers and false teachings. Timothy is to teach men not to “teach strange doctrines,” “guard what has been entrusted to him” (1 Timothy 6:20), “retain the standard of sound words,” and “guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

As the pillar and support of the truth we are compelled to:

1. Listen well in worship to Scripture proclaimed through song, readings, and sermon. This includes lots of sleep on Saturday night!
2. Study the Word privately and in groups.
3. Choose a verse a week to memorize and meditate upon. Own it as your own.
4. Honor God and His Word with your obedience.

As we do so, we will be functioning as God intended us to, as the church.

Introducing...



By Marcia Lichte, Women's Ministries Director

Let's share our gifts, abilities, interests and time with each other!

Some of us have been gifted with great abilities to...

...bake, plan & cook great meals, ride a horse, scrapbook, knit/crochet, play music, etc.

...and some of us would like to learn to do these things.

Some of us regularly enjoy ...

...walking, hiking, biking, going to plays and concerts, taking in a great museum, sightseeing, serving in the community...

...and some of us would love to share these experiences.

Women's Ministries is putting together a program called "Life Together" to allow us to share our gifts, interests and abilities with each other while getting to know each other better and having a great time doing it! In an informal way, we have already been doing this for a long time with our Scrapbooking Days, exercise class, Bible studies and book discussion group. What we want to do is to expand the idea and include more women and more interests.

If you have an ability or interest that you would love to share with other women, please let us know! It can be a "one-time" thing, like going to a particular play or museum, or it could be something that lends itself better to a series of meetings over a period of time, like baking or cooking classes. Big or small, on-going or one-time thing—it doesn't matter! The important thing is that we share our lives, time and abilities as we change and grow into the women that God has created us to be.

Please contact me, Marcia, at 714-637-3220 ext 228, or email womens@taftavenue.org to get involved or provide any ideas or input. Thanks!



Update from Shaun and Maria Sheahan



“Thank you!” to all who personally support Maria and me in the calling God has for us. Kingdom work was never meant to be done without a strong, supportive community of encouragers, co-laborers, and supporters. We do not take lightly your role in His ministry with us.

NieuCommunities (NC) has been a great fit for us for the last several years. We love mentoring and find it to be one of our natural gifts. Training younger folks in a lifestyle of living with and for Jesus is one of our passions and the fruit has been affirming. Growing leaders on both sides of the border to carry on the Kingdom mandates gives us wonderful hope for the future when Maria and I are no longer in the game.

Because our site in Golden Hill San Diego has grown to over capacity with all those that want to be trained, we have sensed God moving two NC staff families, the Chapmans and us, to start a new site not far from Golden Hill. A possibility is Sherman Heights, a mostly Latino neighborhood under threat of gentrification. It is full of homeless people on its streets and depressed people within its homes, yet restoration is happening. It is centered between downtown and Barrio Logan, which was the biggest gang community in the U.S.

Sherman Heights is missing a good community hub, a place where people can gather both formally and informally. It needs a coffee shop. Thankfully, some

monies are slated for such projects. This coffee shop would be run by a community of focused followers of Jesus, staffed by both believers and non-believers, and a space to hold art events, music, community meetings, etc. Just recently, we were offered the opportunity to take anything we can move out of a Starbucks.

We have not been able to move into the neighborhood with the rest of our team yet because homes are too expensive. This is a major challenge, as the Chapmans lose their current housing September 2nd. Not living in the neighborhood keeps us from participating fully and spontaneously with our neighbors, co-laborers, and apprentices.

Having ministered for over thirty years, our support has lasted as long. We are now at a point where many of our faithful supporters have retired, passed away, or have been hit by the recession blues. We continue to seek new support while both Maria and I work flexible part-time jobs. Adding to this, we are in one of the most financially demanding stages of family life. This leads us to live simply and in faith, which is certainly not a bad thing, but it makes it difficult to move forward.

Quick update on our family: Jeremy and Kaory are studying at City College; Jeremy is pursuing recording engineering and Kaory general studies for now. Josh is in his final year at High Tech High, a leader in his youth group, and plays a wild bass. Maria and Shaun are enjoying going on dates in their pre-empty nester stage.

We would love to pray for you. Please let us know how!

Shaun and Maria Sheahan

Wednesday Night Suppers Startin' Again!

All-church Wednesday night suppers start again on Sept 14. Helpers in all capacities are needed in the kitchen. If you have half an hour or 2-3 hours to spare, we welcome your help and hope you will join us. For more information contact:

Steve Shafer at 714-814-9287 | sshafer@dslextreme.com or

Cindy Everett at 818-599-3877 | tceverett@roadrunner.com

India Mission

By Steve Hicks



Our September India team is now well into their training, mapping out their strategy with our friends in Siliguri. The team will leave LAX on Thursday, September 22, arriving in Siliguri two days later and return to LAX on Tuesday, October 4. This campaign, as with all of the others, will take on a slightly different look, as they focus on maximizing the three tenets of our ministry there: evangelism, discipleship and church planting. As we work with the pastors and evangelists in Siliguri, we will re-visit villages in an effort to ensure that the gospel has been adequately proclaimed, that sufficient follow-up is being done, and that teams are in place that have started churches, with the emphasis on them planting other churches.

Please pray for the safety and health of our team, that all deadlines are

met, and that they will see God's Spirit at work. Pray for the pastors, evangelists, and translators, that they will be used by God to convey the Gospel message. And pray for the wonderful people of India, who, although truly impoverished, are willing to invite strangers into their homes. May they find the one true God, and accept His free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

As a reminder, the team consists of the following people: Bill Petersen, Bill Runion, Pastor Bob Burris, Cathy Tharp, Katie Burris, Kristie Koontz, Gary Meier, Lee Ramlo and Mary Beth Ramlo. Before they leave, make sure to contact the team members and let them know you will be holding them in prayer. Also, look for further announcements in the church bulletin for activities related to the trip.

Relentless grace

A relentless pursuit
she has never known
to the arms of another
she runs

Here,
he comes
breathless
fingers lifting his skirt from the dust
his arms,
an embrace
a welcome home
for her cheatin' heart.

With morsels and sweet words
he woos her to his side
draws her to the baptismal waters
though her sins are as scarlet
they will be white as snow.

His delight in her will be unending
his love for her will never fail
and on that fateful wedded day,
consummation
will unite bride and groom forever.

She will never leave his side
he has purchased her with his life
and as she descends from heaven
all he sees
is gleaming white dress
and radiant face
reflecting his.

"Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

By Ingrid Chung