



A Life That Counts by Pastor Stephen Kaneshiro

Someone who has lived a hard life, who has had physical and emotional challenges, who has been a Christian for only a few years, and who is now facing “end of life” issues, can their life really count for something good? I want to give a loud and resounding “YES!” to that question. Mary Ann Devore is such a person. I am so blessed to know and love her. She is not perfect, but she is a struggling saint.

Romans 1:7 (KJV) says, *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* This same passage in the NLT version says: **Romans 1:7 (NLT)** *I am writing to all of you in Rome who are loved by God and are called to be his own holy people. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.* Several more times in the Book of Romans Paul refers to all Christians as Saints. This means that all who love Jesus Christ and are submitted to Him are Saints and this is what I see in Mary Ann.

Mary Ann has been in Maui Memorial Medical Center for about 3 weeks. She was having episodes where she was falling. Finally, she took a very nasty fall and was taken to the Emergency Room. They discovered that she had broken her arm and as they were further examining her they also discovered a mass about the size of a golf ball in her right lung. They removed that part of her lung. With further testing, they also discovered that she hurt her neck in one of her falls. This week, Mary Ann was told that with that fall, she suffered a spinal cord injury that has left her with some paralysis. This paralysis has weakened her arms and legs. It has also affected her breathing and her ability to cough up and expel things from her lungs. All of this contributed to Mary Ann coming down with pneumonia last weekend.

Finally, this week, Mary Ann was given some bad news about her medical situation. She now knows that she is dealing

with life ending issues. She knows that after the 3 weeks she has spent in the hospital, her spinal cord injuries remain the same and will probably not get any better. This will open up the possibility for her to come down with pneumonia again and that her paralysis will probably not get any better. She was told in a very loving and compassionate manner that this may all lead to the end of her life. This is causing her to face many decisions about her treatment and care, and how to wrap up all of her affairs.

Through all of this, Mary Ann has faced it with the peace and joy of knowing that she is in the hands of the Lord. She has not panicked or fallen apart. She seems to be taking all of this with the grace and strength that can come only from the Lord. Now I am sure that this has been, and will continue to be, a very tough time for her as she thinks about what is happening and what may still happen to her. However, every time she fixes her mind and heart on the Lord, there is unspeakable joy in her face and especially in her eyes. That unspeakable joy is being used of the Lord in some very powerful ways. I know that the Lord is touching me through Mary Ann’s dependence on Him.

I know that Mary Ann could have a few more years left in her life, or she could be gone tomorrow. I also know that God is not finished with her yet and if Mary Ann will yield her life completely to the Lord, He will use her for His honor and glory. All that I see and experience in Mary Ann’s life indicates

that, this is exactly what she is doing. If there is fear in her life about what lies ahead for her, she is doing a great job of hiding it from me because I just don’t see it. I see a woman who is depending on the Lord at maybe the most crucial time in her life. I see a woman who loves the Lord and is willing and ready to accept whatever He has in store for her. Mary Ann’s life truly counts. She is making a difference, if for no other reason, she is making a difference in my life. When the Lord determines that Mary Ann has completed her journey, He will call her home to be with Him forever in Heaven.

As I have grown to love and appreciate Mary Ann over these past few years, the Lord has taught me some valuable lessons. Here is a woman whose love for

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The Church on the Fringes

By Jonathan Parnell

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the Lord drives her. With all of her difficulties, she has been one of VIF's most faithful members. It is difficult for her to get around with her walker and it has always been very painful, but it doesn't stop her from getting to church. She has been on so many medications and some of them make her very sleepy, but she gallantly fights the sleep to try and get as much as she can out of every message and teaching. I can tell you that it was not uncommon for her to talk with me about something I said or a point that I made in my preaching or teaching. She fought through all of her difficulties to take and finish T4T and Multiply. She also gallantly applied all that she learned, sharing and ministering to those around her. Her vision was getting worse and worse and so we made the Newsletter in Large print so that she could read it. Now her vision is so bad that she is not be able to read it. It might be good for us to care for her by reading the Newsletter and the Bible to her. What I am trying to say through all of this is that Mary Ann was working powerfully through the excuses that could have kept her from growing in her love for Jesus Christ. She did not complain but she fought through all disdain, so now she is sustained by the love that she has for the Lord Jesus Christ and by the love that He has for her.

Mary Ann's life does count and she is making a difference. As Christmas is right around the corner, I believe that Mary Ann is an example of one who has fallen in love with the Jesus of Christmas and who is joyously obeying the Jesus of Easter. She has had a tough life and is going through very difficult current circumstances, but she is still living a life that counts and makes a difference. Let's all take notice of Mary Ann's example of loving and trusting in Jesus through all situations of life and let's start to address the excuses in our lives that hinder and stop us from being all that Jesus wants us to be. God bless you all and have a Merry Christmas.



The church is a community of Christians living as the on-the-ground expression of the supremacy of Jesus by advancing his gospel in distance and depth. As the *on-the-ground* expression, and since gospel advance happens in *distance*, the local nature of the church is indispensable. The church is the *place* — the here and now — of Jesus's new creation reign in an old creation world.

As the assembly of those made new in Christ, we come together in space and time, and we make Jesus known in those blessed limitations. Advancing the gospel in distance means we cross the street, and the oceans, to tell others the good news. It means we go *out there* into the darkness with the light of God's love.

Far As the Curse Is Found

But we also remember that *out there* isn't the only darkness. If we know our own hearts, we know it gets dark in here, too. So not only must the gospel advance in distance, it must also advance in *depth*. Jesus came to make his blessings flow "far as the curse is found," and that means both the curse *out there* among the highways and hedges of this world, and the curse *in here* among the nooks and crannies of our soul.

Not only must the gospel advance in distance, but also in depth.

The "in here" domain refers to what we traditionally call *sanctification*. It is concerned with the gospel's advance that invades every territory of our lives to bring it under the lordship of Jesus. This is what Paul means when he says, "[Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" ([Colossians 1:28](#)).

This vision for gospel witness goes deeper than a few "decisions" made or baptisms recorded. Paul's ambition for the gospel's advance is mature disciples of Jesus — disciples warned and taught and made wise in the knowledge of God. Any church's mission that doesn't include this is, bluntly, sub-Christian. Put

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The Church on the Fringes

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more bluntly, any church's mission that doesn't dream of making mature disciples of Jesus actually defies the gospel itself. Jesus died to make *new creatures* — to make a new world. Any discipleship vision that has standards lower than this is short-circuiting the gospel's power, and therefore, the power of God ([Romans 1:16](#)).

No Other Institution

Gospel advance in distance and depth means the good news of Jesus penetrates *everywhere* and all of *me* — and this is central to who the church is. In fact, it is the church, *and only the church*, that has been given this mission from God and been molded for it by God. There are simply no substitutes. You will not experience the overcoming power of the gospel in your life without the local church. It will not happen. You will not experience the overcoming power of the gospel in your life without the local church.

According to another sketch from Paul, the church is being built up “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” ([Ephesians](#)

[4:13](#)). Which means, if we will be mature in Christ, *we must be mature together*. We are a body joined together, growing up together in love. For there is no other institution under heaven given among men by which we must be sanctified.

Let's Go There

This commitment to maturity is the responsibility of the church corporately, and our responsibility to the church as individuals. Jonathan Leeman writes, “The local church is your highest authority on earth when it comes to your discipleship in Christ and your citizenship in Christ's present and promised nation” ([Church Membership](#), 25).

The local church is who helps you grow in Christ, and who affirms your identity in Christ. Which means, if you say you are a Christian, but you are not a covenant member of a local church, there is no good way to know that you are legit. Saying you're a Christian without being part of a local church is, by definition, to be nominal. It means you are claiming the name, but there's nothing to vouch for it. Someone will say, “You have your local church and I have my personal Christianity.” Show me your personal

Christianity apart from the local church; I will show you my personal Christianity *by my local church* — by the brothers and sisters who see my life up close and know how I'm really doing.

That is what depth means. It means we push through the name-only way of doing things and we live at the heartbeat — not where it's comfortable, but where it matters. How are you? No, I mean, *how are you?* This is the repeated question of churches advancing the gospel in distance *and depth*.

To be sure, it's not easy. The nitty-gritty of our lives is a frontier all its own. But there is more of Jesus to be known on these fringes. Let's go there.

Jonathan Parnell (@jonathanparnell) is a writer and content strategist at Desiring God, and is the lead planter of Cities Church in Minneapolis–Saint Paul, where he lives with his wife, Melissa, and their four children. He is also the co-author of [How to Stay Christian in Seminary](#).

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CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Wednesday, December 24th at
Wailuku Elementary School
Cafeteria



5 pm Set-up

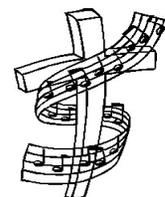
6:30 pm Service



Tear down immediately following

NO PRAYER MEETING

on December 24th
and 31st.
Will resume on
January 7th



Today's Worship Songs

Love The Lord
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
O Holy Night

VIF FOOD PANTRY

Word of ENCOURAGEMENT

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.

A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.” ACTS 2:42-47

The vision of the VIF food Pantry is to live out Acts 2. Perhaps you and your family have a need. This FOOD PANTRY is for YOU! We as a family, want to follow THE WORD and live life together. Come and grab a bag of groceries-your need is why the pantry exists. And while you’re there-lets share a prayer giving GLORY to GOD as he grows us all in knowledge and grace.



Or perhaps you know someone in need-family or neighbors. This FOOD PANTRY is for YOU! Its so SIMPLE. We just look for opportunities to share the gospel with real and practical helps. And a bag of groceries in someone’s life may be just the opportunity to supply a need, develop a relationship, and share the truth of God’s Eternal love in the Gospel of Jesus.

Sunday, Dec 28, the pantry will be open to distribute a bag of groceries to members of our church, friends, and neighbors. The plan is to make ourselves available to both be the hands and feet of Jesus to meet practical needs, as well as to create opportunities to develop relationships and share the Gospel simply defined as God’s perfect love for us in Jesus Christ.

Stop by the back of the church. Get a bag. Bring a friend or help identify someone who may be blessed by a visit and a bag of groceries. If you know anyone outside of our church with whom we can share the true gospel as we meet physical needs, let us know. God will use us all for His Glory as we live out Acts 2:42-47. We all have something to share as brothers and sisters in God’s family.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Vince Bagoyo at: 357-3842 or bagoyofam@hawaii.rr.com.

child care Schedule

Today

December 21, 2014

Team 3

Rosie Quenga

Vicky Quenga

Shalia Mendez

McKenna Mendez

Danica Cooley

Dyllen Caoile

Next Week

December 28, 2014

Team 4

Karen Fontanilla

Judy Giron

Jaydee Giron

Jules Giron

Kolbe Fontanilla

Alysha Fontanilla

BAPTISM TODAY

Please join us for the baptism today, immediately following the first service.

Volunteers Needed!



We are in need of people to volunteer to clean our church facilities on High Street. Tasks include:

Sanctuary/3 bathrooms:

1. Vacuum floors
2. Empty rubbish containers
3. Straighten room/dust as needed

Please call or email the church office if you’d like to help. We ask that you choose one day of the following: Thursday, Friday, OR Saturday of the week that you are able to volunteer to do the work.

If three people were to volunteer each week, it would take only about an hour or so to complete. By joining together in this task, we can have fellowship, fun, and bring glory and honor to the Lord. Please pray about this need.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Biblical Counseling Conference



Register by January 2, 2015
Visit www.waterhouselecture.org
or call 732-5561 ext. 204

Funded by the Waterhouse Charitable Trust

Kahului Baptist Church • 309 S. Puunene Avenue



Funded by the Waterhouse Charitable Trust

Schedule of Sessions

Friday, January 16

- 6:00-7:00 p.m. Registration
- 7:00-7:45 p.m. Session 1: A Biblical Case for Counseling Ministry
- 7:45-8:00 p.m. Break
- 8:00-8:45 p.m. Session 2: What Kind of Problems Do People Have? (Part I)

Saturday, January 17

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:00-9:45 a.m. Session 3: What Kind of Problems Do People Have? (Part II)
- 9:45-10:30 a.m. Session 4: Helping People Change (Part I)
- 10:30-10:45 a.m. Break
- 10:45-11:30 a.m. Session 5: Helping People Change (Part II)
- 11:30 a.m. -12:15 p.m. Session 6: Helping People Change (Part III)
- 12:15-2:00 p.m. Q&A Lunch with Dr. Heath Lambert *



* Q&A Lunch with Dr. Heath Lambert (\$5 admission; includes lunch & Heath Lambert's audio recordings of "The Counseling Lay of the Land" and "Die to Self and Grow in Love.")

** Light refreshments will be provided during registrations and breaks.



ASSOCIATE PASTORS



The office will have a special schedule in the next two weeks. We pray you have a most blessed Christmas and New Years!

- December 24th:** Office will close at noon
- December 25th:** Office Closed
- December 26th:** Office Open
- December 29th—30th:** Office Open
- December 31st:** Office will close at noon
- January 1st:** Office Closed
- January 2nd:** Office Open
- January 6th:** Office will resume regular schedule

As we come to the close of 2014, I want you to know that God has blessed us with excellent staff. We have two very fine and Godly men who serve as our Assistant Pastors. I am now elevating them to you as our Associate Pastors. This means that in the event that something was to happen to me, that would prohibit the carrying out my responsibilities as your Senior Pastor, our Associate Pastors could adequately carry out all of my responsibilities until you, the members of VIF, can determine who the next Senior Pastor would be. Both Pastor Darren and Pastor Jeremy have shown to me, their deep love and commitment to the Lord and their deep devotion to VIF. In my opinion, we are blessed to have these two men whom God has prepared and is still preparing.

Pastor Stephen

Valley Isle Fellowship 2014/2015 Calendar

December 2014

- 21 AM - Pastor Darren - Christmas: A Time of Great Opportunity
PM - TBA
- 24 **Office closes at 12pm**
NO PRAYER MEETING
Christmas Eve Service Set-up—5 pm
Christmas Eve Service - 6:30 pm - Pastor Jeremy
- 25 **Christmas Day: Office Closed**
- 28 VIF Food Pantry
AM - Pastor Stephen - A New Beginning
AM - Tear-Down: Christmas Decorations @ WES
PM - TBA
- 31 **Office closes at 12pm**
NO PRAYER MEETING

January 2015

- 1 **New Years Day: Office Closed**
- 4 AM - Pastor Stephen - TBA
PM - TBA
- 11 AM - Pastor Jeremy - TBA
PM - TBA
- 16 Waterhouse Lecture Series: Biblical Counseling Conference at Kahului Baptist Church
- 17 Waterhouse Lecture Series: Biblical Counseling Conference at Kahului Baptist Church
- 18 AM - Pastor Darren - TBA
PM - TBA
- 19 **Martin Luther King Jr Day: Office Closed**

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).
Matthew 1:23 (ESV)

Valley Isle Fellowship

ph: (808) 244-0865
www.vifmaui.com

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

Wailuku Elementary School Cafeteria
355 S High St. Wailuku, HI 96793

1st Service - 8:00 am

Child care available at High Street property

2nd Service - 9:45 am

Children & Youth Sunday School at High Street property

Assistant Pastor

Darren Sarmiento
Cell: (808) 757-1651
Email: darrenvif@hawaii.rr.com

Senior Pastor

Stephen Kaneshiro
Cell: (808) 419-8100
Email: icastephen@gmail.com
121 Hoowaiwai Lp #801
Wailuku, HI96793

Assistant Pastor

Jeremy Kaneshiro
Cell: (808) 280-2780
Email: vifjeremy@gmail.com

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICE

VIF Church Sanctuary
473 S High St. Wailuku, HI 96793

6:00 pm



"Valley Isle Fellowship Church"

A Time of Great Opportunity

Pastor Darren Sarmiento

Luke 2:25-32 NCV

²⁵ In Jerusalem lived a man named Simeon who was a good man and godly. He was waiting for the time when God would take away Israel's sorrow, and the Holy Spirit was in him. ²⁶ Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Christ promised by the Lord. ²⁷ The Spirit led Simeon to the Temple. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple to do what the law said they must do, ²⁸ Simeon took the baby in his arms and thanked

God:

²⁹ "Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant,
die in peace as you said.

³⁰ With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you prepared before all people.

³² It is a light for the non-Jewish people to see
and an honor for your people, the Israelites."

³³ Jesus' father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "God has chosen this child to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too."

1. You can only know and believe in Jesus by the _____ .

2. Simeon had his _____, now it is our _____.

Notes: