

The Echoes

February 2011

“And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant”

Genesis 9:14 - 15a

Happy Valentines Day

This is the month of love? With all the strife and nasty rhetoric flying around these days it's about time for a 'love break' or a reasonable facsimile, or perhaps our social network needs an attitude adjustment!

How 'bout we just send our biggest enemy a dozen roses and see what happens. What, you say, you don't have any enemies. Come on now, if you're half way serving the Lord you've got plenty!

We're far past the day of acceptance of our love for our heavenly Father and well into the days of deception, hatred for anything or anyone who is serving God, and violence towards us!

I know there are those who don't participate in such days of celebration but I, for one, have never had a problem with doing cool things for the one I love. I only wish I could do more. Once again this past Christmas we didn't exchange gifts in favor of the kids and grandkids, but the idea of Valentines Day is all about sharing with that special person in your life. Cool, very cool!

At least get him or her a card, hopefully one that expresses the way you really feel, or maybe you ought to make a card and fumble through your expressions of love in real time.

On second thought maybe it's not such a good idea to expose your real feelings. Get a preprinted card with lots of sweet nothings, a box of chocolates or flowers. It'll do wonders for your relationship.

Editor

Challenge them with Truth

(Kevin DeYoung from *Eternal Perspective*)

In the church growth heyday, scholars and pastors were wrestling with how to reach out without dumbing down. Today I would argue that we reach out precisely by *not* dumbing down. The door is open like never before to challenge people with good Bible teaching. People want to learn doctrine.

Whether they accept it all or not, they want to know what Christians actually believe. Young people will not put up with feel good pabulum. They want the truth straight up, unvarnished, and unashamed.

Thom Rainer did a study a number of years ago asking formerly unchurched people the open ended question, "what factors led you to choose this church?" A lot of surveys have been done asking the unchurched what they would like in a church. But this study asked the formerly unchurched why they actually were now in a church.

The results were surprising: 11% said worship style led them to their church; 25% said children's/youth ministry; 37% said they sensed God's presence at their church; 41% said someone had witnessed to them from the church; and 49% mentioned friendliness as the reason for choosing their church.

Can you guess the top two responses? Doctrine and preaching; 88% said doctrine led them to their church, 90% said the preaching led them there, in particular, pastors who preached with certitude and conviction!

One woman remarked, "we

attended a lot of different churches for different reasons before we became Christians." So many of the preachers spoke with little authority; they hardly ever dealt with tough issues of Scripture and they soft-sold the other issues. Frank & I know now that we were hungry for the truth.

Why can't preachers learn that shallow and superficial preaching doesn't help anybody, including people like us who weren't Christians?" When it comes to reaching outsiders, bold, deep, biblical preaching is not the problem, It's part of the solution.

The next generation of our churches needs to be challenged too. In his book on the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers, Christian Smith coined the phrase "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" to describe the spirituality of American youth.

They believe in being a good moral person. They believe religion should give you peace, happiness, and security. They believe God exists and made the world, but is not particularly involved in the day-to-day stuff of life. We are naïve if we think this is not the faith of some of the best and brightest in our churches, or even those reading this article!

Church people are not stupid. They are not incapable of learning. For the most part, they simply haven't been taught. No one has challenged them to think a deep thought or read a difficult book.

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No one has asked them to articulate their faith in biblical and theological categories. We expect almost nothing out of our youth, so that's what we get. Two generations ago 20 year olds were getting married, starting a family, working at a real job or off somewhere fighting Nazis. Today 35 year olds are hanging out on Facebook, looking for direction, and trying to find themselves. We have been coddled when we should have been challenged.

Challenging the next generation with truth starts with honest self-examination. We must ask, "do I know the plotline of the Bible? Do I know Christian theology? Do I read any serious Christian books? Do I know anything about justification, redemption, original sin, propitiation, and progressive sanctification? Do I really understand the gospel?"

We cannot challenge others until we have first challenged ourselves. The average churchgoer must think more deeply about his faith. Many Christians need to realize, that they don't really know what they believe or why they believe it!

You've heard it said that Christianity in America is a mile wide and an inch deep. Well, it's more like half a mile wide now. Christian influence is not as pervasive as it once was. I'm convinced that if Christianity is to be a mile wide again in America, it will first have to find a way to be a mile deep.

Shallow Christianity will not last in the coming generation and it will not grow. Cultural Christianity is fading. The church in the 21st century must go big on truth or go home!

Tithing Reports

I have just finished sending the Tithing Account Donation letters for income tax purposes.

The Executive Board thanks you for your support, and may God bless you abundantly for your faithfulness in tithing 2% of your ministry income to Full Gospel Churches International.

If you've given over \$250 you should receive a report. If you haven't received it by the time you get this Echoes, just give me a call, as I sent them out on January 7th.

Thanks so much for your continued support.

Sis. Donna Ross,
General Sec/Treas.

Renewals

Renewals are always dated and sent out by February 15th, usually they go out a few days sooner.

Please be aware that not only the **Minister's Renewal** form will be coming to you, but, also **the Church Charters** as well.

If the post office doesn't deliver yours, please call my office and I'll get you another one sent out immediately.

When you send them in, know that the turn around back to you is only a couple of days. I do them ASAP so again, if your card does not make it in a few days, please, let me know within a week or so.

Last year some were not delivered even though they were sent out on time.

The Minister's renewal fee is \$40 and Church Charters are \$50. If you are 70 years old and have been with the Fellowship over 5 years, yours is free, however I do need your renewal form sent back to me properly filled out.

It would be a big help if you would return them as early as possible. They are due by April 15th

If it's later than that, you must pay a \$5 late fee. It causes me more work and the expense of sending another letter.

May God bless you and your ministries in the coming year. Let's get excited and work together in unity more than ever this year to see more souls come into His Kingdom. He's Coming Soon! Praise God!!!

Sis Donna Ross,
General Sec/Treas.

Church On Fire

On the morning of New Years Eve Trinity Faith Tabernacle in Smithton, IL. experienced a fire.

"We received a call at 4:45 am that our storage shed beside the church was fully engaged in a fire. The shed was a complete loss along with all the contents inside."

The heat from the flames caused over \$5000 damages to the church building itself and while they did have insurance on the church building and the storage building, the limits for the storage building are much lower than the cost of repair.

"We earnestly covet the prayers of our Fellowship during this time and any help you might provide would certainly be much appreciated."

Contact:

Pastor Charles V. Seger
Trinity Faith Tabernacle
2906 Floraville Rd.
Smithton, IL 62285

618 971-0120

www.trinityfaithtabernacle.webs.com

'Editors Note'

Since we are a 'fellowship of independent ministries' it would seem to me that we have an obligation to help those of our fellowship when they are in need.

Please prayerfully consider what you can do on behalf of these good folks. They didn't ask for anything more than your prayers; but surely we can do more!

Lighten Up

Doctors say that if you eat slowly, you will eat less. This is particularly true if you are a member of a large family!

One good thing about being married is that you can't make a fool of yourself without knowing it!

Success comes in cans ... failures in can'ts!

Can't never did anything, can did wonders!

If you feel you have served your apprenticeship and are ready to launch out, remember there are no free scholarships in the school of experience!

A thing done right today means less trouble tomorrow!

An ounce of performance is worth a ton of complaint!

Letter from college student: "Please send food, all they serve here is breakfast, lunch and dinner."

The Echoes

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All submissions must be received no later than the 20th of the preceding month.

New Members, Advancements & New Churches

Kansas:

Rev. John A. Ricketts, Exh.

North Carolina:

Painted Highway Ministries;
Revs. Nelson & Jamie Wright

Texas:

Rev. Timothy G. Teague, Lic.

Texas Fellowship Coming Soon

Plans are being made for a Texas State Fellowship; to be held in late March. The place will be at End Tyme Fellowship Church in Bastrop, Texas; with the possibility of an Ordination service also.

State Superintendent and Pastor Fikes said, "here we are at the start of 2011 and many in our fellowship continue to work faithfully in spite of personal losses and life's hardships."

Keep an eye out in The Echoes and on the information board of fgci.net [our Fellowship web-site] for further information and updates.

Olive Tree Ministries

In the January Issue we announced that Olive Tree Ministries web site appeared to be no longer functioning, the truth is it was listed improperly which is why you could not access the site.

Rev. Don Stuva has corrected us. The site is good when the proper address is used. That address is:

www.olivetreministries.com
Editor

Rev. Anthony Gibson Web-sites

<http://www.parentlearningclub.com>

<http://www.freewebs.com/wordoflifechurch/>

'Please note the change!'

Graduation With Honors

Pastor Jim Cartee of New Beginnings Full Gospel Church in Mineral Point, Missouri, graduated to Glory on January 17, 2011 after a long battle with illness. He will truly be missed.

Cards or letters may be sent to
Rev. Sandy Cartee,
11711 Springtown Rd.,
Mineral Point, MO 63660

Heart Gifts

It's not the things that can be bought that are life's richest treasure.

It's just the little heart gifts that money cannot measure.
A cheerful smile, a friendly word, a sympathetic nod,
Are priceless little treasures from the storehouse of our God.
They are the things that can't be bought with silver or with gold,
For thoughtfulness and kindness and love are never sold.

They are the priceless things in life for which no one can pay.

And the giver finds rich recompense in giving them away.

Helen Steiner Rice

F.G.C.I. General Office Credentials ~ Church Charters

**Tithes & Offerings
World & Home Missions
Offerings**

By-Law Books - (\$5.00)

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Guidelines for Dating Couples

While researching materials for this Valentines issue of The Echoes I came across this Guideline for Dating Couples in my office, written by a minister in Portland, Oregon for his daughters. Tough but true. *Editor*

**If you're a Christian, date only Christians!
(II Corinthians 6:14)**

If you're a committed disciple, date only committed disciples!

Christ is with you all evening—wherever you go and whatever you do!

**Remember your date is your brother or sister, not your 'lover!'
(I Timothy 5:1-2)**

Go out in groups, not alone!

Focus on talk, not touch; conversation, not contact!

Avoid fast-moving relationships or instant intimacy!

Plan the entire evening in advance, with no gaps!

Avoid setups—never be alone: on a couch, in a car late at night, in a house or bedroom!

Be accountable to someone about your purity!

Imagine your parents and church leaders watching you through the window. God is watching!

Write out your own standards and enforce them yourself—never depend on someone else!

Don't do anything with your date you wouldn't want someone else doing with your future mate!

Beware of the 'moral wear down' of long dating relationships and long engagements. Once young people and parents agree on marriage, it's dangerous to wait longer than necessary!

"And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh." Genesis 9:15

Are you planning on moving? Please notify us of your new address: E-mail us at: theechoesfgci@yahoo.com

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