CORNERSTONE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FRONTLINES

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 7 JULY 2017

Renewing our families, our communities, and our world by bringing faith and life together in Christ.

LESSONS FROM THE WEST COAST

BY CARTER SANGER

Just outside my window I hear the waves crashing against the rocks below. With the sounds come a gentle and cool breeze. Looking west I see the vastness of the Pacific Ocean which seems to fall off the horizon. Looking north I see sheer cliffs bounded by foaming waves on one side and the Pacific Coast Highway on the other. Looking south I see an old lighthouse which sits on property now run by the hostel in which I write.

It's an interesting place filled with interesting people, and I can't help but love it. I've visited with girl scouts from Arizona, listened to German in the bathroom, enjoyed the aroma of a curry dish cooking in the shared kitchen by one of the guests, and shared coffee with people from all over the world. Staying in such a place removes the typical hesitancy of starting conversations. It is a lesson in hospitality.

And yet, lurking under the surface is a hostility ready to blossom should it be discovered that I am a Christian. As much as tolerance is preached, it only reaches so far. Christians, believed to be the source of hate in the world, are an exception. On the wall next to the check-in desk is a sign that reads like a statement of faith: "HATE has no business here. We respect WOMEN. We value BLACK LIVES. We stand with the LGBT COMMUNITY. We stand with IMMIGRANTS and REFUGEES and PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS. We stand with our community." It is so positioned that crossing the doorway feels like signing your name in agreement. Do I?

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"GENERATION TO GENERATION" IS THEME FOR GA

BY CARTER SANGER

This past week was the EPC's 37th General Assembly. It was held at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church in Sacramento, California, from June 21-23. Besides the heat (108-110 degrees) it was a good week to see many of the characteristics and values of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church reaffirmed. There remains a fervent desire to maintain orthodoxy and practice grace.

The assembly opened with worship and a sermon on Psalm 78 and the significance of reaching the next generation with the gospel. This means faithfully and intentionally teaching and training our youth but also learning to do so in their cultural language. After worship we heard from Mark Knoll, Research Professor of History at Regent College, who helped put Martin Luther and the Reformation in its historical context (as this year marks 500 years from Martin Luther's famous nailing of his 95 theses on the Wittenberg castle doors).

The second morning opened with David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, who gave lots of

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Holiday schedule: The church office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4, in honor of Independence Day.*
- *New sermon series covering Isaiah 56-66, "The Sovereign Conqueror", will begin in July.*
- *Please pray for out NOMP Committee as they look for ways to interact with and minister to our neighborhood.*

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SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

BY GENE COVER

- Carter told us about some of the Organic Outreach strategies that his Pastor's Cohort have been talking about. In the Matthew 13 parables that we have heard sermons about recently, there is the one about the seed sewers where the seed falls on different types of soil. The problem, of course, is with the soil, not the seed nor the sewer. One of our jobs is to prepare the soil for sewing. Carter also gave us some tips on how to witness to Millennials. (We note that there was a presentation at General Assembly last week on this subject – we hope to hear more.) Carter encourages us to be diligent about the three people we are praying for who need to come to a saving faith in Christ.
- Bob Vincent, our Presbytery's facilitator, met with us to bring us up to date on his activities. One of his main jobs is to encourage pastors in the tough job that they have. Bob should know: he has been a pastor for nearly fifty years. Bob is also a resource for sessions that are dealing with some sort of difficulty.
- The Nominating Committee will be trying to fill openings for one ruling

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We were saddened by the loss of one of Cornerstone's own recently. Betty Alexander passed away on June 21, at the age of 89. Her sweet spirit was loved by all—especially husband Tom, three children, ten grandchildren, and twelve great-grandchildren. A Memorial Service was held at Cornerstone on Saturday afternoon, June 24.

Our love and sympathy go out especially to Tom, daughters Susie Kolesar and Becky Yuvancic, and granddaughter Lauren Torregano, and their families.

In addition, Sharon Peterson's sister Gabbie Rhoads died unexpectedly on June 22. Although Gabbie has had some serious health issues, she was recently declared cancer-free. Sharon and Carl and their children are driving to Maryland, where Gabbie lived and where her funeral will be held on Saturday, July1. She was 28 and leaves behind a husband and two children Please continue to lift up this family in your prayers as they grieve their loss.

WOMEN'S CENTRAL PERK WILL BE FRIDAY, JULY 14

The next Women's Central Perk will be held in the Cornerstone Den on Friday evening, July 14. This will be an "unprogrammed" evening, beginning at 7:00 p.m.

We'll have the coffee on, and you may bring a snack or other beverage if you wish.

Come spend some time hanging out with your sisters in Christ and catching up on summer activities.

See you then!

THREE WORK DAYS PLANNED FOR JULY

There are a number of light-duty maintenance jobs around the church which are waiting for some attention. We will work—mostly indoors—to touch up and beautify the campus on three Saturdays in July.

Work days will alternate with the Loving Our Wives group and will be held on July 1, 15, and 29, from 8:00 a.m. till noon. Everyone is welcome, and kids can help, too, so plan to come and bring the family.

Mark Williams and Jack Kutzer have a list of jobs, so if you need more details on tools to bring, etc., just contact one of them.

Join us for some simple fix-up tasks around the church buildings in July.

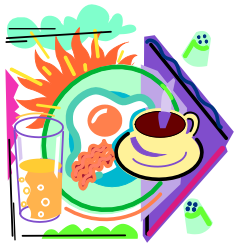
ACTIVITIES WITH THE ARC OF KATY!

August begins with the final **Cornerstone Day @ the Arc** on Wednesday, August 2, at 10:30 a.m. for Community Crafts, lunch and recreation. Come take part in all the fun! If you can help us feed the campers that day, sign up at *www.volunteersignup.org/EXLBB*.

Next on the calendar is the annual **Arc Sunday** on August 6. This year, we are celebrating 6 years of hosting the Arc of Katy. We are inviting the Arc families to join us for a Continental Breakfast and worship. Plan to be there at 10:00 a.m. that morning to enjoy fellowship together with the families.

Thursday, August 10, is the **Arc of Katy Open House**. They enjoy sharing what they did over the summer – and everyone is invited.

Contact Carol Kutzer if you are interested in being part of any of these activities. (281) 579-1080 or *info@CornerstoneKaty.org*.



Help us welcome the Arc campers and their families with a Continental Breakfast on Sunday, August 6, at 10:00 a.m.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

BY CAROL KUTZER

☺ **And the winner is**… The winner of June's Candy Inner Tubes Game is Miss Evi . Her guess of 55 pieces of candy in the jar was the closest to the actual count (79) without going over. Congratulations, Evi! She will receive a Chick-fil-A coupon and all the candy in the jar. Be sure to submit your guess for July's Candy Game…and be sure to write clearly and include your FIRST & LAST names. To encourage our kids to read the *Frontlines* newsletter, winners must ask Mrs. Kutzer for their prize.

☺ **Kids Camp Cornerstone Kids:** Make plans to send your kids to the next Kids Camp on Thursday, July 13 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Activities are designed for PreK (age 3) through kids going into 5th grade this fall. The cost is $15 per child or $35 per family of 3 or more children per day. Registration Forms available from church office.

☺ **Get to know our Childcare Workers:** Question of the month – What is your favorite restaurant?

- Ms. Ann – Olive Garden
- Ms. Kinsey – Hasta la Pasta
- Ms. April – Cheesecake Factory
- Ms. Carol – Saltgrass Steakhouse

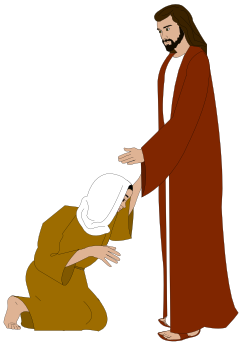
SESSION HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

"WE HAVE DECIDED TO WAIT ON THE [MASON ROAD SIGN] REPLACEMENT UNTIL WE HAVE ACCUMULATED SOME SURPLUS…."

(Continued from page 2)

elder and three deacons. Gene Cover has served six consecutive years and cannot serve for another year. John Barrett and Joe Gourlay have served their first three years as deacons and can serve another three year term. Ben Moyer needs to be replaced as deacon for an unexpired term.

- We continue to have some shortfall in giving, and have had some unexpected, high maintenance costs in the past month. Our finances look pretty much in line with last year, but bears the careful attention that the deacons are giving it..
- The Mason Road sign still needs to be replaced. We would like to upgrade to a newer style with LED lighting, but those signs cost more than our budget, way more than the insurance settlement: $30-40,000 total. We have decided to wait on the replacement until we have accumulated some surplus and try to get some lighting on the banner that's up now. The deacons are preparing a prioritized list of desirable improvements for our campus. A new sign may not be at the top for now.
- Nathan gave us an update of the status of the church plant. He is recruiting a team to come alongside him and has gotten an offer to use some space at a gym on Sundays for worship services.
- We are thankful for the new members who have recently joined and for all the visitors we have been having. We continue to pray for 300 members by year's end so that we can support the church plant financially and with people. Please join us in that prayer.



Much of the compassion Jesus espoused is reflected in causes we would not usually support.

LESSONS: SOME COMMON GROUND

"I'M REMINDED OF THE POWER OF HOSPITALITY AS A MEANS OF SHARING FAITH. IT OVERCOMES DEFENSES AND WINS A HEARING."

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It is easy to hear the words that are not written. We hear the promotion of the feminist agenda. We hear that police are defined predominantly by racism and violence. We hear that gender identity is a matter of personal choice and that sexual preference and practice is morally neutral. We hear that the president and the current immigration laws ought not be obeyed. We hear that religion (faith in God) is a subjective and personal preference with no real value other than psychological.

We hear these as truths that everyone ought to understand and embrace. In other words, we hear a faith position promoted with evangelistic fervor. Ironically, it affirms the importance of faith AND the importance of promoting that faith. It is a lesson in evangelism.

And yet, there is a lot of good in these statements too. It recognizes that every person, regardless of what defines them, has dignity. It recognizes the plight of the oppressed and seeks to stand against oppression. It values community. These are all things that Jesus teaches us to embrace. As broken as people are and as much as some might reject Christianity, God's image still shines through.

So what am I learning through this? I'm reminded that sharing the gospel is not optional. We are evangelistically bent as long as we seek community. Am I evangelistic about what I say I believe about Jesus and His Kingdom? I'm reminded of the power of hospitality as a means of sharing faith. It overcomes defenses and wins a hearing. Am I practicing hospitality? I am reminded that people have dignity. Am I treating them with such? I'm reminded that we all have much more in common than we think, giving us ample places to start conversation. Am I engaging with people?

Are you?

Carter

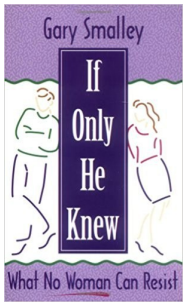
"LOVING OUR WIVES" KICKS OFF

An informational meeting for the new initiative called "Loving Our Wives" was held on Saturday, June 24.

Sam Downing and Carl Peterson explained the goal of helping men see their roles as husbands in a new way. Men from the congregation will be sharing their stories and insights in the coming weeks.

The group will meet the second and fourth Saturdays in the church Fellowship Hall from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. and will use the book If Only He Knew: What No Woman Can Resist by Gary Smalley for this study. Copies may be ordered from Amazon.

Many regulars members were out of town for this first meeting, but you are encouraged to attend the next scheduled one on Saturday, July 8.



Gary Smalley's book will be used in the Loving Our Wives group.

MAJOR EVENTS MARK FATHER'S DAY AT CORNERSTONE

Baptisms, new members, and farewells made Sunday, June 18, an eventful day at Cornerstone.

We welcomed the Arnold family—Curt, Julie, Izzie, Stella, and Scarlett— including Patsy Ferguson, and Toni Cotton as new members.

During the baptisms, Nathan Cotton asked Scarlett Arnold, "Do you know what a princess is?" He then assured her that she is a princess in God's eyes.

Nathan also had the joy of baptizing his and Alisa's son Levi.

While we are celebrating these new members, it was with regret that we said goodbye to some other members in June.

Pradeep Benjamin will be returning to Canada and joining his family there. Unexpectedly, Ben Moyer was offered a new job in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He and Diane and their three children have now made that move. We pray that God will guide them all to a new body where they can grow and be nurtured!

Carter received membership vows from Curt and Julie Arnold, Patsy Ferguson, and Toni Cotton on June 18.

Nathan and Alisa Cotton brought their son Levi Aaron to be baptized on Father's Day.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE ELECTED

Cornerstone members held a Congregational Meeting following worship on Sunday, June 18, to elect two members-at-large to the Officer Nominating Committee.

Rhonda Sanger and Lynn Weatherly were elected to join elders Gene Cover and Kent Saugier on this committee.

Their task will be to identify one candidate for Elder and three for Deacon (The Moyers' unexpected move to Arkansas means that Ben Moyer will now need to be replaced.)

Please give any suggestions that you have for officers to one of these committee members. Since candidates must be examined before election, no nominations are taken from the floor.

DEPRESSION HAS MANY CAUSES

In the June issue of Frontlines, Sam Downing discussed two common causes of depression:

1) *Physical causes such as exhaustion, illness, or poor self care.*
2) *Significant life changes or traumas*

This month he deals with two more important issues and will continue in August.

BY SAM DOWNING

Both grief and anger can be causes of depression.

"WE WON'T NECESSARILY EXPERIENCE THESE STAGES OF GRIEF IN ORDER, BUT... WE WILL HAVE TO WORK THROUGH EACH STAGE IN WHATEVER ORDER THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES TO EACH OF US."

3) Cause of depression—grief

Life is difficult from time to time. We all have experienced life's difficulties in one way or another. Some of us have had to deal with the death of a loved one. Some of us have had to face severe illness, serious accidents, loss of health or physical function, loss of job and income, loss of family and friends and other kinds of difficulties, losses, and crises.

The hard thing to consider is that life will bring difficulties to us again. In John 16:33 our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ told us that in this world we will have tribulation. In Matthew10 Christ informs His disciples of the trouble and persecution that they will suffer at the hands of men. Troubles and tribulation will happen to us in this broken and fallen world. Any and all of these difficulties disrupt life. They throw our emotional, relational, financial, vocational, mental, and spiritual life into uncertainty and chaos.

With a lot of prayer, good support from family and friends and church, hard work and effort, and some emotional reserves (emotional strength and maturity that have not been overtaxed by having to deal with several difficulties in a row) most of us pull through and life returns to a little bit of normal. For some of us, however, hard times and life difficulties lead to depression.

Almost any loss or hardship we experience in this world produces grief. We are familiar with the seven stages of grief:

* shock and denial,
* pain and guilt,
* anger and bargaining,
* depression (reflection and loneliness),
* the upward turn (things begin to look and feel better),
* reconstruction and working through,
* acceptance and hope.

We won't necessarily experience these stages of grief in order, but one way or another we will have to work through each stage in whatever order they present themselves to each of us.

There is no set time for grief to work itself out. Depending on the severity of the loss the healing progress could take a few days, a few months, or a few years (the average for severe loss is 5 years!). Therefore patience is called for on the part of the sufferer and those of us who love and care for the sufferer.

Notice that depression is one of the stages of grief. This depression is normal and should be expected. It is part of the sufferer's life for a while, but it is usually the mild to moderate type. It will happen. We will have to go through it. This depression stage will normally transition into another stage in the healing process of grief.

One of the questions that is almost always asked when someone comes to one of our lay counselors complaining of depression-type symptoms is, "Have you gone through any difficult changes in your life in the recent past?". We know that a person who experiences loss or another of life's difficulties can get stuck in depression or can move immediately into depression as the result of that loss or difficulty.

Can someone get stuck in other parts of the grief process and have difficulty working through the loss? Of course … but that is the subject of a different series of articles.

4) Cause of depression—anger

A lot of us grew up in families that dealt with emotions in a less than healthy way (if they were dealt with at all). In my home one could experience emotions as long as you did not call too much attention to yourself and as

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DEPRESSION: NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS

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long as they were manly emotions like anger or frustration. Crying, sadness, emotional hurt and such were for "girls" and discouraged.

However emotions were never talked about or dealt with as something normal or something that needed to be worked through with the aid and guidance of loving mature parents … not even anger. So I had to learn to deal with emotions on my own.

Without realizing it, I learned to turn some of my anger against myself. I would say to myself something like, "Boy was that stupid! You should have known better! Any idiot could see that that was a bad choice! What's wrong with you!?" After a while I began to believe my self-talk. As a result when I stumbled in life I would go immediately into depression.

Anger turned onto oneself is a major cause of depression. While that is not the only unhealthy way of dealing with anger it is certainly frequently found to be the case in people experiencing depression.

Looking at a person who is really angry and showing depression we would only see the sadness, the lack of emotions, the slow torturous movement, the lack of interest in normal activities and the other normal symptoms of depression. That is hardly the look of an angry person. The depression masks the anger from those of us observing. Depression even masks the anger from the awareness of the depression sufferer.

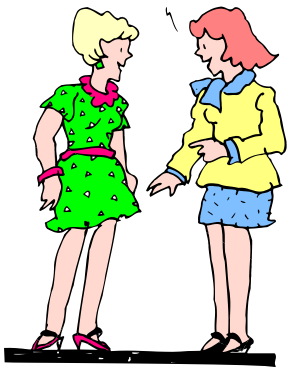
In the church culture there is a general understanding that one is not supposed to be angry or depressed. One can be angry or depressed at home or when no one is around but not at church and make sure you get over it quickly. Such unbiblical, spiritually immature, and unhealthy attitudes only make healing for the depressed person more difficult.

There are several other causes, but we will go over them in the next article. For now I want to offer some help to those who may be involved with a loved one who is going through depression. What do we do? How can we help them without making the situation worse? There are several things that can be done.

- **Encourage your loved one to seek help.** Get them to a trained pastor or Christian counselor or Christian psychiatrists. If they are already getting help encourage them to stay with it. If they are on medication encourage them to take their medication as prescribed
- **Be willing to listen.** Let your loved ones know that you want to understand how he/she feels. Listen carefully and don't offer unsolicited advice.
- **Give positive reinforcement.** Remind that person of how much he/she means to you.
- **Offer assistance.** Give suggestions about specific tasks you'd be willing to do for them or help them accomplish.
- **Help create a low stress environment.** Creating a regular routine may help a person with depression feel more in control.
- **Locate helpful organizations.** Help locate support groups and other organizations that offer help to depressed persons and encourage them to attend. Sometimes that may mean driving them to the meetings and back home after the meetings.
- **Encourage regular church, small group, Bible study attendance.** A loving church community is a place that should supply emotional and spiritual encouragement. That is part of the churches Biblical responsibilities.
- **Make plans together.** Ask your loved one to join you for a walk, or a bike ride, or a night out at the movies. Try to pick activities your loved one previously enjoyed. Encourage but don't force.

As usual, if anything stated or mentioned in this article raises questions for you, please feel free to contact one of our pastors, or elders, or one of our trained lay counselors (Jeff Magee, Evelyn Saugier, Sam Downing or Alisa Cotton).

"IN THE CHURCH CULTURE THERE IS A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT ONE IS NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ANGRY OR DEPRESSED."



Listening and encouraging a person with depression are two good ways to help.

KAZAKHSTAN TRIP COMES TO AN END

"...WE WERE VERY INTENTIONAL TO ENGAGE OUR STUDENTS IN THE SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS."

In spite of many unexpected obstacles and changes of plans, the Duysekov's trip to Kazakhstan gave them the opportunity to engage in meaningful ministry. Below is an excerpt from Daka's recent newsletter:

We have culminated our summer project with a weekend retreat where we had over 20 students join us for some community time. In the midst of that we were very intentional to engage our students in the spiritual conversations. Daka was able to lead a discussion on life and regrets in your life and if they had a chance to go back into the past what would they undo. That in itself created a chance to have some meaningful conversations and share the Gospel with our students.

Finally, after everyone left we are enjoying our time in Almaty with Daka's family. It's refreshing to get some down time after a long year of ministry.

However even in the midst of that we are praying and trying to be a salt and light to Daka's family. Many of his relatives are fasting now during the Ramadan. I, Daka, had a few spiritual conversations with my mom about God's forgiveness and mercy and how we are so grateful for David and how he is such an answer from God. Keep praying for the Lord to open doors for us and for the boldness to be His ambassadors to my Muslim family and friends.

Once again we want to express that you all are a continual source of joy and encouragement to us as you pray & give so faithfully so we can continue this work for the Lord.

Blessings,
Daka and Heather and little David

The Bridges Welcome Party for incoming international students has been scheduled for Saturday, August 19. Mark your calendar now to be part of this important event, and watch for more details to come!

What machine would you build with a bag of LEGOs?

The boys heard about creatures that live down, down, down in the ocean during story time.

KIDS CAMP IS FUN FOR ALL

The first Kids Camp was a fun time for all—kids and leaders, too! The boys and girls age 3 through 5th grade enjoyed crafts, stories, cooking, games, and snacks, and a surprise birthday party.

The second session is planned for Thursday, July 13, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and registration is open for that.

Cost is $15 per child or $35 per family. Contact Carol Kutzer to register.

Lots of fireworks were created during art.

Everybody enjoyed celebrating Joleon's birthday.

Keeping cool is easy when you are in the pool.

General Assembly: reaching Millenials

(Continued from page 1)
insight to understanding and reaching Millennials. This, coupled with one of the network lunches I attended on reaching Millennials was very helpful.

We commissioned several missionaries as part of **Engage 2025** who will soon go to the Middle East. It was a moving ceremony as they took vows in light of the increasing danger to their lives, and in light of Andrew Brunson's continuing imprisonment in Turkey. In conjunction with this was an inspiring sermon by Dr. Mike Kuhn, one of our missionaries from the Middle East, who spoke on God's mission to the Arab peoples by looking at Hagar from Genesis 16.

It was encouraging to hear about the **Go Center** and the church planting efforts. The Go Center is a resource center devoted to helping revitalize churches. There is much information available on reaching Millennials. Churches continue to be encouraged to be a parent, partner, or patron with regard to planting churches:

- **Parent churches** take on planting a church on their own.
- **Partners** seek to share the financial and resourcing responsibilities for a church plant.
- **Patrons** make room in their budget for church planting in general.

The only business that caused some measure of debate and difference in voting was the adoption of a new position paper on Human Sexuality. It replaced our position paper on Marriage. The new paper seeks to incorporate a Biblical view of human sexuality (in the context of marriage) that addresses our current culture's views on gender identity and sexuality. It makes explicit the Bible's view of sex in the context of marriage between a man and a woman with the goal of clarity and graciousness.

> "But we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever, **from generation to generation** we will recount your praise."
> Psalm 79:13

The debate revolved around the position paper on Marriage and whether or not it should continue to be part of our library since marriage is more than its sexual component. The encouraging aspect of the debate, from my perspective, was that both sides stood in agreement on their theology. There really wasn't a wrong answer on the vote.

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