CORNERSTONE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FRONTLINES

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

MISTS OF THE MORNING

BY CARTER SANGER

The more I read the news, the more I find the morality of God under attack. Sometimes it's subtle—such as a new character in a favorite show revealed and celebrated as homosexual, as though it is the most normal thing in the world.

Sometimes it's not subtle, such as the calls for boycotts against whole states for voting to protect the lives of babies in the womb. Under the guise of "anti-fascism," Antifa employs violence to shut down conservative groups because they hold different views from their own, which is a bit ironic given that fascism seeks to do the same thing. Hollywood and the media reflect a culture moving farther and farther from Judeo-Christian values, and more and more Christians find themselves being targeted for their counter-cultural views. *"The wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart." (Psalms 11:2)*

It's disheartening, particularly for one who seeks to "*lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way*" as Paul instructs in 1 Timothy 2:2. How is the Christian to hold onto his morality and not sink into despair? The Psalmist puts a voice to this lament, "*if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11:3)* Indeed, what can the righteous do?

Even as I quote Psalm 11, I am reminded that this is nothing new. Ancient Israel, a nation forged in the fires of Mt. Sinai, saw the same thing happening to it. But it was no surprise to God, and God did not leave it alone. While we may not understand God's ways, we

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ENCOURAGING WORDS

BY SAM DOWNING

Want to get better at encouraging others? (Yes, that even includes your spouse and your teen age children.)

Scripture tell us to "Encourage one another". While that certainly includes a pat on the back and a positive word, encouragement is much more than that. We all have a personal story.

Unfortunately most of us never get the chance to tell our story, whether it is our whole story from our earliest memories or what happened today at work. From time to time the loneliness and isolation of not having or taking the time to tell our stories brings breaks into our lives. We long for that person who will take the time to just listen and for the personal courage it takes to reveal our story to another.

Dr. Larry Crabb in his book Encouragement tells us that taking the time and having the ability to listen to another's story is a major part of what it means to encourage another. We all grew up listening to people around us. Unfortunately we just don't do it very often or very well. The good news is that it is so easy to learn how to be a good listener.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Sunday School will resume on September 8, the week after Labor Day.*
- *Be looking for how you can help us be hospitable to the other folks in our Presbytery when they meet at Cornerstone on September 27-28.*
- *Carter will begin a new sermon series this fall. Be watching for the topic.*
- *Our birthday list needs updating! If you are a new member or regular visitor to Cornerstone, please send your birthdays (day and month only) to Linda Cover at cover.linda@yahoo.com.*

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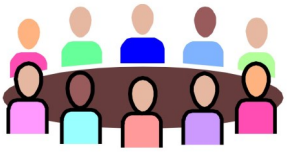
THE LASTEST FROM QUEST CHURCH



The Session and Deacons did not meet in July.

Hello Everyone,
I hope you and your church are doing well. I'm overwhelmed with a recent outreach initiative so I'll be brief, …

The challenges we are dealing with include the summer slump, one of our key/founding couples moving to South Carolina for work, and another key/founding couple wavering in their commitment due to being frustrated that we are not making more progress.

Some positives things that have happened include:

- A grilling outreach we held recently that was well attended.
- A backyard Bible study we held, trying to reach out to our neighborhood.
- Our women's ministry leader held a retreat at her home and had 47 women come to it.

I have been going door to door to share the gospel, invite people to church, and hand out a brochure that has a gospel presentation on one side and information about the church on the other side. I am trusting that even if we don't see any direct visitors from doors I've knocked on that nevertheless the Lord will bless the effort to get the gospel out and send people our way. Everyone so far has been friendly enough and there have been some seemingly good connections/conversations.

I took out a Facebook ad nine days ago offering to pray for anyone who had prayer requests. The response has been overwhelming and it has generated all kinds of gospel conversations and opportunities to counsel and minister to people who are hurting…. This has opened my eyes afresh to what an absolute ocean of pain we have all around us.

Let me know how I can pray for and serve you and your church as well.

Yours in Christ,
Brett Becker
Quest Church

Proof that prayer works!
A group rented a lift to trim trees at the church and at Sam and Mary Downing's house. No one was hurt and even Don Russell made it safely back to earth. God is good.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HELD SUNDAY, JUNE 30

Cornerstone members held a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, June 30, to elect two members to the Officer Nominating Committee.

Daniel Cassady and Todd Glover were elected to join Session members Tom Lott and Don Russell on the committee.

If you have suggestions for officers, please pass them on to one of these men. Nominations are not taken from the floor when the committee presents its recommendations.

Nominees for Elder or Deacon must have been members of Cornerstone for at least one year and not be on or the spouse of any member of the Nominating Committee.

Ben Colston will complete his first term as an Elder this year and may be nominated for a second term. Joe Gourlay is serving his second term as a Deacon and may not be nominated for another term.

BRIDGES WILL WELCOME NEW STUDENTS ON AUGUST 24

A new year, a new location for Bridges' biggest event! We love the opportunity to bring new international students into connection with local volunteers.

Bridges International, the organization that Daka and Heather Dyussekov are involved with at the University of Houston and Rice, will host its annual Welcome Party for incoming international students on Saturday, August 24. It will be held at 1515 South Blvd, Houston 77006 (walk around to the backyard).
They will need lots of helping hands that day to greet the new students, serve them lunch, and just hang out and visit with them.

Jim and Becky Yuvancic have been very involved with Bridges and can tell you what a rewarding experience it is to greet these new students—many of whom have just stepped off a plane! Look for more details closer to the time, or just talk to Jim or Becky.

Can't make it to the Welcome Party? You can also help meet a practical need for incoming international students at the University of Houston by taking them to the grocery store on Saturday, August 17. This is a chance to make a huge impact as you tangibly express God's love.

Contact Daka Dyussekov at (281) 217-6460 to volunteer or learn more about these opportunities.

You can be part of this great event to welcome international students to Houston!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

BY CAROL KUTZER

☺ **And the winner is**… The winner of June & July's Starburst Fruit Chews Game is Mr. Kent Saugier! His guess of 211 was the closest to the actual number of Starbursts in the jar (238). Congratulations, Mr. Saugier! He will receive all the candy in the jar.

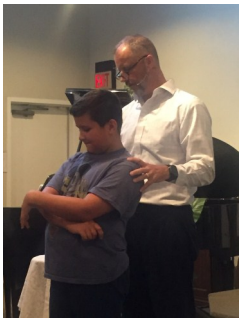
Be sure to submit your guess for August's Game…and be **sure to write clearly and include your FIRST & LAST names**. To encourage our kids to read the *Frontlines* newsletter, winners must ask Mrs. Kutzer for their prize.

☺ **Sunday Morning Classes:** Classes are scheduled to resume on September 8 (the Sunday following Labor Day). If you have questions about curriculum or placement of your child, please contact me. I am always happy to answer questions.

I am recruiting teachers and assistant teachers at this time. Please pray with me for the Lord's work in the hearts of those He has called to this opportunity.

☺ **Get to know our Childcare Workers:** Question of the month: If you could rename yourself, what name would you pick?

- Ms. Ann Alcorn: Angela
- Ms. Carol Rutar: Danielle or Charlotte
- Ms. Kinsey Spain: Luna
- Ms. Laura Garay: I asked my mom why couldn't she change my name to Candy. I'm glad she didn't. lol!



Jayden Raul Montoya was baptized during worship in June. We rejoice with his parents Shane and Jessica Jarvis on this important step.

TWO CHOICES FOR WOMEN THIS FALL….

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY TO RESUME SEPTEMBER 19

BY BEVERLY TUCKER

All Cornerstone women are invited to join us for Bible study and fellowship on Thursday mornings beginning September 19 from 9:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

This fall we will be studying the Beatitudes, eight blessings recounted by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 5. The book, Be Who You Are, by Christy Boys, is a nine-week study to reveal our true identity in Christ.

"For Jesus followers, what Jesus says matters most. Wouldn't it be amazing if Jesus told us who we really are? Through the Beatitudes he has given us clarity regarding our identity.

In this study we will see that each Beatitude:

- Reveals a reality – not a command
- Unpacks a divinely given attribute
- Guarantees a spiritual inheritance"

Each Thursday of the study, we will gather in the Sanctuary building to study, pray, and enjoy refreshments.

Childcare for pre-school aged children and younger is available if needed.

Contact Beverly Tucker at *tuckerjb10@icloud.com* or 281-574-0699 or Evelyn Saugier at *evelyn.saugier@gmail.com* or 281-392-9383 if you have questions.

Ladies' Bible studies will resume in September. Find one that suits your schedule.

EVENING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY BEGINS TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

BY JENNIFER MAGEE

You are invited to join a faithful, loving group of women every Tuesday night who meet from promptly from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the church.

We will begin Tuesday, September 3 and end on December 3 with an optional end of semester gathering on December 10.

We will study the book, Keep It Shut: What To Say, How To Say It, And When To Say Nothing At All by Karen Ehman. This is a twelve-week study with fellowship/prayer evenings on one Tuesday every month.

You will love getting to know this wonderful group of women! Contact Jennifer Magee at 832-265-0270 if you have any questions and/or if you are planning on joining us.

ENCOURAGEMENT: MORE THAN A PAT ON THE BACK

(Continued from page 1)

On Saturday, August 3, at Cornerstone in the Education Building from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m., Kim Elgie, Kathleen Shumate, and Sam Downing will present a workshop on listening skills.

Good listening is a skill, and skills take knowledge, coaching and practice to learn. We have broken the process into three parts and will present a little information on each part followed by demonstrations and practice of each part.

We hope it will be not only informative and a bit fun but will help each of us to be better at encouraging our brothers and sisters in Christ and those who don't know Christ as Lord and Savior that God gives us a chance to love and influence.

See you there and then. Light snacks and child care will be provided.

We all need someone to listen to us. Learn how you can do that better.

REVELATION 7:9 TASK FORCE PRESENTS SOME CHALLENGING FINDINGS

At the June EPC General Assembly, the Revelation 7:9 Task Force presented its interim report. The following are short excerpts from that report.

The 38th General Assembly of the EPC approved a motion to study how the EPC can better become a denomination that faithfully embraces, worships with, and serves our neighbors from "every nation (ethnicity), tribe, people, and language."

We heard difficult questions asked by local church leaders including:

- Should all EPC churches with ethnic minority populations within a 5-mile radius develop strategies intended to reach those neighborhoods?
- If pastors and ministry leaders believe ministry to minority culture is important, how can we better convey the importance of that priority to Session and congregation members?
- Assuming ethnic minorities want to see people like themselves in leadership positions, should we be satisfied that local church staff ministry leadership is comprised of less that 10% minorities?

Three questions were raised often enough that we wanted to address them in this Report:

1) What is the biblical basis for the work of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force? Is the text more descriptive or prescriptive?
Our short answer is: The Great Commission. Note that the English word *nation* is the Greek is *ethnos,* which means "ethnicities." Note again that this instruction to be witnesses in word and deed is first local, then moves regional (which signifies the marginalized) and then global (the remainder of the earth).

There can be little doubt that the Great Commission is an imperative—it is prescriptive, requiring action consistently over all time until Jesus returns, not just descriptive of a moment in time.

2) Why is the American Church so ethnically divided?
The simple answer: The fallen condition causes us to focus on skin, not sin. The Church at its birth took pains to intentionally lean into being a gathered community for all ethnicities. But during much of European and American church history, the church systematically separated by class and color, and the reason was not merely "birds of a feather flock together."

But thanks to the triune God, the church has redeemed some of this divisive narrative and we in the EPC can aspire to a more united Kingdom.

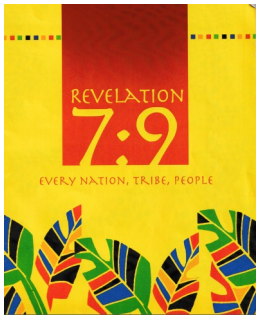
3) Expectations in the EPC from Revelation 7:9
Should all EPC congregations represent the diversity of their locality to reflect God's unity and mosaic nature? Is there a place for ethnic-specific churches? Don't people naturally cluster with others of the same language and culture?

People in the majority culture (which is currently the makeup of most EPC churches) usually need to make deliberate efforts to cross cultures that those in minority cultures do not. One of the goals of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force in the next year will be to identify and suggest resources and models for making these cross-cultural efforts more attainable.

Those in the majority culture tend to have more money, more influence, more access, and greater ability to effect changes where needed. We are called to be good stewards of all God has entrusted to us.

Conclusions
As the Revelation 7:9 Task Force enters its second and final year, we will integrate much of what we learn—especially best practices—into the recommendations in the final report brought to the 40th General Assembly (2020) of the EPC. Looking ahead to this final report, you can expect specific steps we may take as a denomination, as presbyteries and individual congregations toward becoming a missional church that moves faithfully toward the vision of the Kingdom of God revealed in Scripture.

"SHOULD ALL EPC CHURCHES WITH ETHNIC MINORITY POPULATIONS WITHIN A 5-MILE RADIUS DEVELOP STRATEGIES INTENDED TO REACH THOSE NEIGHBORHOODS?"



The EPC task force, with representatives from every presbytery, gave its initial report at the June General Assembly meeting.

Mists: trust God's justice

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can take comfort in His presence, for He is a refuge for the weary and the disheartened. As the Psalmist writes,

> *4 The Lord is in his holy temple;*
> *the Lord's throne is in heaven;*
> *his eyes see, his eyelids test the*
> *children of man.*
> *5 The Lord tests the righteous,*
> *but his soul hates the wicked*
> *and the one who loves violence.*
> *6 Let him rain coals on the wicked;*
> *fire and sulfur and a scorching*
> *wind shall be the portion of*
> *their cup.*
> *7 For the Lord is righteous;*
> *he loves righteous deeds;*
> *the upright shall behold his*
> *face. (Psalm 11:4–7)*

There is a day of recompense. Wrongs will be made right and the weary, despairing person who trusts in God will behold the face of the God, which is a way of saying he will find the warmth of God's pleasure washing over him.

This morning I woke early and went out to watch the sunrise over the lake. The weather turned chilly the night before and as the sun rose, so did the mists. It was as though the sun was calling to the heat trapped in the cold, Michigan waters, to rise and come to it. God calls his people to do the same.

Guatemala team gets a send-off

We prayed for the success of the Guatemala Team during worship on Sunday, July 21. They will leave Houston on Saturday, July 27, and be gone through Saturday, August 3. Please continue to pray for them.

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