From the Senior Pastor’s Desk

By Freddy Fritz

Welcoming Visitors

A few weeks ago I saw a blog by Thom Rainer titled, “Top Ten Ways Churches Drive Away First-Time Guests.” Intrigued, I read the blog. Rainer notes that all churches have experienced first-time visitors who never return. He wondered why that happened. So, he did a Twitter poll to ask first-time visitors why they chose not to return to a particular church. Although the poll is not scientific, the answers given in the poll are nevertheless fascinating.

Here are the top ten responses in order of frequency: (1) Having a stand up and greet one another time in the worship service, (2) Unfriendly church members, (3) Unsafe and unclean children’s area, (4) No place to get information, (5) Bad church website, (6) Poor signage, (7) Insider church language, (8) Boring or bad service, (9) Members telling visitors that they were in their seat or pew, and (10) Dirty facilities.

I read that list with interest. Although some may disagree with me (at least on one or two items), I don’t believe any item in the list above is a major issue for visitors to our church. Nevertheless, most of our first-time visitors do not return.

In a separate blog Thom Rainer notes that genuinely-friendly churches (GFCs, as he calls them) have a visitor return rate that is six times greater than other churches. That is astonishing! So, if a church is genuinely friendly, they can expect to see a much higher return of first-time visitors.

So, what makes a church a genuinely-friendly church?
Rainer suggests that for a church to be a genuinely-friendly church (GFC), it must meet 11 of the following 14 criteria: (1) They are intentional about being friendly, (2) The leaders model warmth, humility, and friendliness, (3) The leaders are clear that genuine friendliness is more than a brief stand and greet time in a worship service, (4) GFCs utilize a secret visitor at least twice a year, (5) GFCs have a visitor friendly web site, (6) The church has clear signage, (7) GFCs have a well-organized greeters’ ministry, (8) These churches have clear information places, (9) GFCs have clean and neat buildings, (10) They have a visitor feedback process, (11) The children’s area is clearly safe and sanitary, (12) The majority of church members in GFCs are involved in the community, (13) Small groups are highly intentional about reaching people beyond their own groups, and (14) GFCs have new member classes that emphasize the responsibilities and expectations of church members.

I also read this list with interest. I think we are doing most of these items. But I do think it is a good list to help us evaluate where we can strengthen the way in which we welcome first-time visitors to our church.

My encouragement to each of you is to welcome each person to our church as you would want to be welcomed if you were a first-time visitor.

\[Thoughts\ from\ the\ Associate\ Pastor\]

\[By\ Rev.\ James\ Nichols\]

Why Should you Spend Your Weekend With Us?

As we look forward to the end of February, we see the Missions Conference rapidly approaching. I wanted to take some time to talk about why this weekend is important to our church and how your missions pledge helps with the ministry of missions.

First, I wanted to tell you the new Missions Committee Vision Statement. This statement is meant to guide the committee as it makes decisions about events, support, missionaries, and all other things that come before the committee. The Vision of TBPC Missions is, “Connecting TBPC to the mission field, both locally and globally through prayer, sending, and support.” Our goal is to do everything that we can to encourage, educate and equip you, the members, to understand, participate in, and support the work of missions throughout the world. This begins in our backyard, with the people that you regularly interact with, and extends to our short term trips and worldwide missionaries. One of the greatest opportunities for us as a committee is our annual missions conference. During this weekend, we have three great opportunities for you.
First, on Friday night, we will have a dessert (yum!!!) and fellowship time. This is where you can introduce yourself to the missionaries, learn more about what they do, and hear a short report on what is going on in their mission field. Also, the night will be capped off by a talk from our conference speaker, Rev. Scott Hill. Rev. Hill is the MTW (Missions to the World) missionary working in Cherokee, where we do short term trips every year.

Saturday night we will have a dinner. Tickets will be available during the month of February (at very reasonable prices – trust me, I have to feed three growing boys =] ). After dinner the choir will sing, Rev. Hill will speak, and we will have a “missionary fair.” This will be where the missionaries set up displays of their mission work and we can ask questions of each one.

Sunday will be a busy morning! During the Sunday School and CE&F hour, the missionaries will be rotating through the classes giving some reports and answering questions. Rev. Hill will be preaching during worship. Then, after worship, we will have a farewell potluck to celebrate the missionaries as we send them back to the field. All of these events (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) will have childcare opportunities for the smaller missionaries among us.

Finally, I want to encourage you to begin praying about your gift to the missions budget. The goal of the missions budget is to be able to continue to grow our ability to support those who are on the missions field as well as sending people from TBPC on short term missions. I want to encourage each family to pray about giving. If you already are, come see what your finances are helping achieve during the conference and pray about the ability to increase your pledge. If you are not already giving, prayerfully consider the works that God is doing through the missionaries that we support and the short term trips that we take. Also, I would encourage you if you have children, to ask them to give as well. The amount is not significant, but training our children to give now to not only the general fund, but also to the work of missions is a life lesson for them. We have over 200 members. If each member gave $5 a week to missions, we would increase our missions budget by over $5,000! It doesn’t take much to make a big difference!

I hope that you are encouraged by the work of your missions committee and that we will not only see you at the missions conference events, but also that you will consider continuing, starting, or increasing your giving to the missions budget. God bless and see you at the conference!
Missionaries Supported by TBPC

**Mission to the World**
Peter & Lauren Dishman
Esaie & Natacha Etienne
Ken & Tammie Matlack
Carla Stevens

**Reformed University Fellowship**
Jeff & Jenny Lee

**New Harvest Missions International**
Nathaniel & Cherita Adawonu

**Serving In Missions**
Rene & Lili Palacio

**Wycliffe Bible Translators**
Don & Judy Vander Ploeg
Kevin & Gertrude Nicholas

**Ven Con Nosotros Church**
Dr. Oscar & Elizabeth Alvarez

**PRCC**
Chaplain Ted Hamm
Chaplain James Cochell

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**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

2—Phil Lear
3—Sherrie Kaw
3—Rock Roque
9—Grace Nobles
10—Lizzy Ausmus
11—Luana Isaac
12—Josiah Massie
13—Caroline Coffey
13—Jessica Renae Hunter
15—Chris Atkinson
15—Diana Weinel
16—Margaret Mitton
17—Alisa Carrier
17—Alex McNulty
17—Melissa Noel
21—Jimmy Barber, Jr.
21—Todd Bayley
21—LeeAnn DeStefano
21—Charlotte Page
25—Jon Fritz
28—Marianne Cali

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**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

14 — Mr. & Mrs. Fred Gordon
Thank you

Thank you to everyone who attended the January “Soup’s On” Sister to Sister event. A special thank you to Marianne for her devotional, to Nancy for the games, and to the soup makers as well as everyone who contributed to the buffet table. Remember to keep your prayer partner in prayer and try to get together for fellowship.

Thank you to all the women who are serving the Lord in Women’s Ministry. You are not given enough thanks for your love and commitment to the women of the church. Therefore, let me take this opportunity to say “thank you” to all our coordinators, those women who attend the WM 15 meeting to share ideas and plan events, and women who step up to be workers in our vineyard when a job is not yet filled in the 11th hour. I offer prayers for God’s richest blessings on you all.

February Events

Back by popular demand, Women’s Ministry will sponsor a Game Day Fellowship Event for moms, their children (both boys and girls), and ladies of all ages. This event will take place on Valentine’s Day, February 14th, at TBPC from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Babysitting will be provided for children aged five years and younger, but they too will have games available for supervised play. From 10:00 to 12:00 drinks will be available. Then, at noon we will break from our games and share a light meal provided by the Women’s Ministry from individual contributions as well as WM funds. Please join us for fun, fellowship, and an opportunity to break bread together with our church friends and family.

Looking Ahead

WM will sponsor a shower for first time mom, Melissa McNulty, who is expecting in April. Plans are still not written in concrete, so be on the lookout for details in the near future. We invite all church ladies and friends of the McNulty family to participate and share the joy of celebrating a new covenant child.

Our next Sister to Sister will be held on April 25th at the home of Suzanne Swenson. More information will follow as it becomes available.

Our next WM 15 will be held after worship on Feb. 8th. Plan to attend to share ideas and plan future events.

Volunteers Sought to Assist Immigrants

MNA Second Career Ministry has a variety of opportunities for lay people to help in ministry. For example, Pat Hatch of MNA Refugee and Immigrant Ministry is seeking volunteers across the country to assist immigrants in complying with US immigration laws. There are separate opportunity listings for attorneys and for non-attorney volunteers. Empathy, good listening and writing skills, willingness to take 40 hour training for accreditation is required for non-attorneys. Learn more about this and other opportunities to serve - many which can be done from your own home - at http://www.pcamna.org/second-career or contact Gary Ogrosky at gogrosky@pcanet.org (phone 770-695-4811).
In the last installment, this writer warned you, the reader, that we would be venturing into a controversial arena of prophecy. The 2nd chapter of Nehemiah, verses 1-8, initiate this venture as it relates to Daniel’s prophecy in the book’s 9th chapter of Daniel. We see that Nehemiah requested of King Artaxerxes permission to return to Judah to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. The permission was granted in the spring of 445 B.C. The wall was completed in 52 days under the direction of Nehemiah. It should be noted that the people enthusiastically supported the project by personally working side by side and providing necessary materials and finances. It should also be noted that there was strong opposition, but through prayer and determination, Nehemiah and the people prevailed according to God’s directive purpose.

As was cited above, the decree of Artaxerxes, allowing Nehemiah to return to the holy city of Jerusalem, must be viewed in relationship to Daniel’s vision and the angel Gabriel’s announcement to Daniel in chapter 9, verses 24 – 27. We read the following: “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make an atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. So that you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will seven weeks (of years) and sixty-two weeks (of years); the street shall be built, and the wall, even in troublous times. Then after the sixty-two weeks (of years) the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week (of years), but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction; one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Certainly this is a great deal to absorb at first view; however, outstanding men of God such as John MacArthur, Paul Enns, Grant Jeffrey, Tim LaHaye, John Walvoord, Arno Gaebelein, C.I. Scofield, David Jeremiah, and numerous others, who have devoted most of their lives to the study of Scripture, have reasoned together that there is consensus concerning the central truth of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks prophecy.
To better understand the time involved, we need to remember that the Biblical year was 360 days. The prophecy began with “The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.” The command was issued by the king in the 20th year of his reign, during the month of Nisan. Thus the starting date corresponds to March 14, 445 B.C. The scholars cited above agree that Daniel’s vision of weeks describes the passage of years; one week is equivalent to seven years. Seven Biblical years are equivalent to 2520 days. Based on the division in the prophecy (7+62=69 weeks or 49+434=483 years or 483x360 days=173,800 days).

A careful calculation reveals that approximately, or near exactly, 483 Biblical years from the beginning of Daniel’s prophecy, Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem through Eastern Gate on Palm Sunday, April 6, 32 A.D. and presented himself to Israel as their promised Messiah. Yet according the prophecy, at the end of the 69 weeks (483 years), Messiah would be cut off. The first 69 weeks of Daniel’s vision of 70 weeks were precisely fulfilled because, just days later, Jesus Christ the Messiah was cut off and crucified on the cross, rose from the grave, and ascended to heaven.

Some scholars like John MacArthur believe that the final 7 years of the 70th week was completed when the prince who came to destroy the city of Jerusalem did so in 70 A.D. Other scholars represented by C. I. Scofield believe that the prince refers to the Antichrist who will appear following the translation of the elect and prior to the tribulation period at the end of the ages. As an historical note, Titus did not make a covenant with the Jews prior to his Roman army destroying the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, nor did he and the Roman armies bring about an end to wars or rumors of wars.

Whatever one’s take on Daniel’s prophecy and the accuracy of the numbers of days, weeks, or years, one has to admit the words represent something powerful and exciting to contemplate. The prophecy is there for a reason. It and others like it constitute nearly ¼ of the Bible and should edify believers and warn unbelievers. Deuteronomy 29:29 tells us: “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of the law.” May we all continue to search out the things God has revealed to us, no matter how controversial or seemingly obscure. The Lord revealed to Daniel that he should go his way, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Could it not be that the time of the end is near and the words that have been sealed, lo, these many years, are now being unsealed? The world has become increasingly interested and uneasy about prophecy. Should not we as believers exhibit the same curiosity and concern? Keep reading, reciting, researching, and looking up.

Editor-in-Chief’s note: The article above represents one of several interpretations for the seventy weeks. Other interpretations may be found in the ESV Study Bible (pages 1607-1608).
Some of you might remember one of our elderly members, Margaret Mitton. For those of you who don't let me introduce you to her. Margaret is a communicant member of TBPC and will be celebrating her 100th birthday on Feb. 16th. She is a Godly woman and currently lives in Zephyrhills at Westbrook Manor where she enjoys reading her Bible, doing her daily devotional, and watching sports on T.V. when she isn't visiting with family and friends or taking a little nap.

Our church family will be sending her birthday cards to help celebrate this milestone in her life. If you would like to participate you can either bring a card to church Sunday February 1st or Sunday February 8th, placing it in the basket provided in the narthex, sign a card after church that will be provided for you, or send a card directly to her:

Mrs. Margaret Mitton
C/O Westbrook Ma
6701 Dairy Rd.
Zephyrhills, FL 33542

Does Doctrine Really Matter?

By John McNulty, Jr.

There are many varied responses to the above posed question. To some, doctrine is of utmost importance, sometimes over and against the Bible itself. “Give me doctrine or give me death!” is their call to arms. To others, it is merely a divisive creation of theologians designed to control people. “Doctrine divides,” is their rally cry. “Just give me Jesus!” As with most things, there is a tendency among well-meaning Christians to head toward extremes regarding doctrine. The final word on whether or not something is important to us is the Bible itself. We are not allowed to choose what we like regarding biblical truths. Is doctrine important? Does doctrine really matter? According to the Bible, the answer is a resounding, "yes!" The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus about the importance of sound doctrine (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3; 4:6; 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 4:3-4; Titus 1:9; 2:1). He exhorted Timothy to “guard the good deposit entrusted to [him]” (2 Tim. 1:14). In just two letters in the New Testament, one can see the importance God himself puts on doctrine. If the Lord of heaven and earth thinks doctrine matters, how much more so should we as followers of Christ?

Unfortunately, the relativistic attitude that is ubiquitous in our society has begun to permeate our church walls. “Love wins,” preaches heretical emergent church pastor Rob Bell. “Your best life now,” is the mantra of prosperity gospel spouting Joel Osteen. Saddleback Church pastor Rick Warren repeatedly
capitulates on doctrinal truths in the spirit of ecumenism. Poor doctrine and heretical views such as those espoused by these and other so-called church leaders is nothing new. For instance, throughout Church history, the person and work of Jesus Christ has been called into question by various teachers. Early in the 2nd century A.D., Marcion taught many things contrary to sound doctrine, not the least of which was denying that the God of the Old Testament was the same God as the New Testament. He was expelled from the Church as a heretic around 144 A.D. Arius circa 320 A.D. taught that Jesus did not always exist, but was the first creation of God the Father. He was condemned as a heretic at the Council of Nicea. Docetism is the view that Jesus was God, but not human. Apollinarianism is the view that Jesus was God, but not fully human. Ebionism is the view that Jesus was fully human, but not divine. Nestorianism viewed Jesus as God and human, but in two distinct natures. As one can see, what we believe about Christ is not a mere doctrinal difference—it is an eternal one with dire consequences! As Christians, we must diligently study the Scriptures daily so that we are not “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Eph. 4:14).

When one looks around the Christian landscape, it is impossible to deny the impact of doctrinal divisions. The number of denominations in the Church is a sober reality. Why are there so many? Doctrinal issues! We must never think that God is the reason for the varied amount of churches around the world, “For God is not a God of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33). Any misunderstanding about the Bible falls upon us. We are fallible human beings and are prone to error. That being said, this does not mean we cannot have a solid theological set of beliefs. The Reformation began because of doctrinal issues. Are we to believe that doctrine did not matter to Peter Waldo, John Wycliffe, John Huss, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and a host of others who risked and, sometimes, gave their lives for the sake of the gospel? No my dear friends, doctrine matters.

There are some in the Church that bemoan the Reformation and claim that it does not matter in today’s world. They point to all the death and war that was created by such schismatic movements and say it did no earthly good. Paul however, tells us explicitly that we are to “set [our] minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth” (Col. 3:2). The Reformers fought for truth; they fought for Christ; they fought for God’s glory!

Mere faith does not save us, my friends. It is the object of our faith who saves us. You can be as sincere as you wish, but if you are trusting in anything other than the person and work of Jesus as revealed in sacred Scripture, then your hope is in vain. The Jesus of Islam is worthless to your eternal soul. The Mormon concept of Jesus has no power to save you from the fires of hell. What you believe and who you believe matters beyond anything I can expound upon in this short space.

My dear brothers and sisters, doctrine matters. It keeps us from falling prey to false teachers. It protects our souls from the wily schemes of the devil. Doctrine mattered to the Reformers; doctrine mattered to the Apostles; above all, doctrine mattered to Jesus—it should matter to you as well.
Greetings to you all from a cold and gray Cherokee, NC on this New Year’s Eve day. We hope each of you are doing well and that you will finish this year by counting the blessings God has granted you this past year and that you are looking forward to an exciting 2015 as you consider all that God has in store for you.

We wanted to finish out the year by thanking all of you who have partnered with us throughout 2014 and we look forward to partnering with you in 2015.

Here is a little story for you to consider and perhaps spur you on as you seek to reach out to others with the gospel. Let’s title the story, “White Trash and Relationships”. Now, before you get all excited about the title, I am not calling anyone names. Read on to see what this is all about.

One of our favorite holiday traditions is baking and making goodies to share with friends and family. We usually begin just before Thanksgiving and finish up just before Christmas. One of our favorite goodies that Ruth makes is called “White Trash”, some of you might be familiar with it.

A little over a week ago Ruth was getting ready to make a batch of White Trash and she realized that she did not have everything she needed. So, she made a list and Johnathan and I headed off to the Food Lion to get what she needed. We got to the check-out lane and as we unloaded the items the cashier exclaimed, “I know what you’re making!” She went on to say, “If you have any extra, I will be here until 11:00 and if you can’t make it back by then, I will be back on Wednesday morning.” Now, keep in mind that I am a white guy and the cashier is Cherokee.

So, I said to her, “What do you think we are making?” She hesitated and said, “Well, people call it by different names.” To which I replied, “But you tell me what you think it is. What do you call it?” Again, she hesitated, then she said (rather timidly), “White Trash?” I said, “That’s exactly what it is!” She said, “I love that stuff. I can eat it by the handful.”

Johnathan and I returned home and Ruth made the White Trash. While she was finishing up I told her this story. I said, “If we had something to put some in, I would take her some.” Ruth found a Ziploc bag and filled it up. She put some homemade cookies in another one and put all of this in a gift bag along with a Christmas card with our names on it. We then took it to the cashier at work. She was very surprised and appreciative. When I went back to Food Lion the following Saturday, the same cashier was working. As she was ringing up my items she said, “I have one question for you.” I said, “Okay.” She said, “Where do you preach?” This gave me an opportunity to share with her about our work here in Cherokee and mention that we plan to begin a new church work in the near future.

It is amazing the things God will use to open doors for us to begin a relationship. Please pray that God will give us the opportunity to continue building this relationship that He has provided.

As we conclude this newsletter we would like to share two prayer requests with you.

*Pray for God to provide the remaining 18% of monthly need for us to be fully supported ($1,540.37/mo.).

*Pray that we would be able to begin a small group Bible study in 2015 with some of the individuals we have been able to build relationships with thus far and that God would raise up those He has chosen to be a part of this outreach.

Remember that you can make a pledge and donate online at [www.mtw.org](http://www.mtw.org) or by mailing a pledge amount and check to: Mission to the World, PO Box 2589, Suwanee, GA, 30024-0982. Be sure to make checks payable to MTW and put our last name and account #13394 on the “For” line.

Happy New Year,

Scott, Ruth, Johnathan, and Katie
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<td>8:45 Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children’s Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Youth Meeting</td>
<td>9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 11a Staff Meeting; 6:30p Evening Women's Bible Study</td>
<td>9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Missions Committee Meeting, Outreach Team Meeting, &amp; ESL</td>
<td>9a Morning Women’s Bible Study; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare;6:30p Kids of the King &amp; Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir</td>
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<td>9a NTCA-Sanctuary; 7p Baby Shower for Lindsay Montoney</td>
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The Sunday Schedule

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Inside This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Fritz</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries</td>
<td>3-10</td>
</tr>
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<td>Calendar</td>
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<td>Worship Times</td>
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