



**January 17, 2008**

## **Missions Fair**

This past Sunday evening was the missions fair for our 2008 mission trips. It was the first time we had such an event, and I have to admit it surpassed my expectations. All the food was delicious – Thai cuisine at the Thailand trip booth, Kabanoss at the Estonia trip booth, jambalaya at the New Orleans-Mardi Gras booth, Virginia ham at the Virginia trip booth, and stacks of food at the youth mission trip. The booths were beautifully designed. Our large group gathering was moving. A big thanks to our band for leading us in worship through singing. The commitment time was amazing. So many of you committed by faith to a trip. Seventeen people committed to the Estonia trip. Eleven people committed to go to Thailand. I was most nervous about the commitments to those two trips, and you came through marvelously. We still have room for more. In 2007, we had 119 adults participate in mission trips. I think we might surpass that number this year. Will you pray about which trip the Lord would have you go on?

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## **Fruit From Faith**

Over the course of the fall, a gentlemen in his mid to late 30's that attends our church had a desire to go on one of our 2008 mission trips. He watched what the Lord was doing on our 2007 trips and wanted to be a part of what the Lord is doing with our church family through missions. Yet, he kept telling himself that he couldn't afford to go on one of the trips. In December, he had all but decided it was not financially feasible. Then in January, I talked about committing to a trip by faith and earnestly trusting the Lord to come through. The man went to work the next day and requested time off for a mission trip this year. The boss asked him a few questions about our trips, and our fellow church member told the boss that money might be an insurmountable hurdle to which the boss responded, "You pick the trip you are supposed to go on, and we'll find a way to make it happen." Wow. Our fellow member came to the Mission Fair Sunday evening and committed to a trip by faith and is now earnestly trusting the Lord for it to become a reality.

Which trip have you committed to? If you have already made a commitment, earnestly trust the Lord. He will come through.

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## **Lean On Me**

I am thankful to God for Bill Campbell, my Church Administrator, and Sonny Hathaway, my Associate Pastor. Some may not fully grasp all they do, but suffice it to say, if they did not do all they do, NEHBC and I would not be what we are today. Their efforts enable me to focus on preparing sermons, prayer, preaching, encouraging our folks, and the overall direction of our church.

My staff structure is modeled on 1 Peter 5:1-4 in which the office of Elder is assigned two functions: shepherding and administration (overseeing). Shepherding includes feeding the sheep (Bible Study), tending to the sick sheep (pastoral care and counseling), birthing new sheep (evangelism), and protecting the flock at large from predators and danger (church discipline). The administration function includes finance, legal, facility, property, policy making, etc.

Acts 6:2 indicates that I should not neglect the ministry of the Word to take care of day-to-day church operations. So that I can remain focused on study, prayer, preaching, and the overall direction of the church and based on 1 Peter 5:1-4, Bill is assigned as the point person over all of the administrative functions of the church, and Sonny is assigned as the point person over the shepherding function of the church. Through this structure, I depend heavily on Bill and Sonny to handle the day-to-day operations of the church. Both are well equipped and qualified to fulfill their responsibilities. Bill and Sonny both love the Lord their God. Over the 20 years I have known Bill and the 10 years I have known Sonny, I have seen both of them demonstrate an amazing loyalty to the Lord even during the toughest of times. I knew both of them when they were laymen and now in ministry, and there is no question that they are genuinely committed to the local church. Further, both of them have a heart for missions and evangelism and have demonstrated that passion through regular participation in mission trips and local evangelism. Both of them are strong family men who are genuinely in love with their wives and children. Bill earned his MBA in 1984 and Sonny his MDiv in 2002. Bill has over 30 years of corporate experience in the areas of finance, budgeting, construction, accounting, and personnel. Sonny has six years of ministry experience in addition to many years of mentoring by his father who is a Senior Pastor in Virginia.

I have great confidence in these two men. I meet with them on Monday afternoon of each week for several hours during which they report in to me, and we have the conversations necessary to ensure the three of us are on the same page. Out of our Monday afternoon gatherings, the two of them handle the day-to-day operations of our church family. They work long hours, sacrificially serving the Lord. They make necessary difficult decisions and tough choices that unfortunately sometimes result in hurt feelings. What they do is not always easy, but I know that their desire is always to honor the Lord and do what is best for the overall ministry of our church family. I'd encourage you to say a word of thanks to them the next time you see them. Their work is invaluable.

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## **Sunday Evening Ministries**

This is just a reminder that our Sunday evening ministries kick off again this coming Sunday. All of our ministries begin at 5pm and end at 7pm. Just as on Wednesday nights, our Sunday evening ministries provide something for everyone in your family.

- **Preschool:** Our preschool ministry on Sunday evenings is for Birth – 2 years old. Warm, loving care along with very clean and modern facilities provide the perfect environment for your preschooler to be read the Scriptures, shown the love of Christ, and introduced to the things of the Lord.
- **Children:** Kids from 3 years of age through 5<sup>th</sup> grade participate in AWANA. They are assigned to groups with other children their age, and they experience two hours of high energy Scripture

memorization, Bible stories, and games. One night at AWANA and your child will be begging you to take them back.

- Teens: Hour one is Roundtables -- an intensive large group discipleship experience in which your teen will be taught how to defend the faith. They will be taught that our belief in the Lord Jesus and the Bible is legitimate and defensible. During Roundtables our teens are taught false religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism, and WICAA, and shown where the teachings of these religions fall apart and how the Bible responds to each of these religions' accusations against Christianity. Hour two is game time. Football, basketball, video games, pool, ping pong, music, paintball on our own course, and the list goes on.
- Adults: Christian Life University (CLU) – this is a collection of small group, topical Bible Studies that cover issues such as finance, marriage, child raising, learning how to share your faith, spiritual warfare, theology, etc.

I'd encourage you to participate in our Sunday evening ministries. They are a tremendous opportunity for you and your family to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## **AWANA Clubber and Her Mom**

Here is my favorite story from this past Sunday. A mother walked up to me between the second and third services and told me her 2<sup>nd</sup> grade daughter wanted to be baptized. Here is the neat part of the story – the mother is lost and doesn't know really know what baptism is! The daughter made her ask me. I love it. After a little followup, it turns out the daughter was invited to AWANA by a family in our church and has fallen in love with the Lord. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade daughter started insisting that her mother bring her to church on Sunday mornings, and so now the mom is coming to worship each Sunday. The Lord is so good.

I want to again commend April, our Children's Director, and the Slezak's, our AWANA Commander and their large team of workers. Their sacrificial service in the AWANA ministry continues to pay spiritual dividends. Lives are being changed by the Lord Jesus. Children are being saved. It is impacting entire families for the Lord. Thank you to those that serve in our children's ministries. You are being used as an instrument of righteousness by our Lord Jesus.