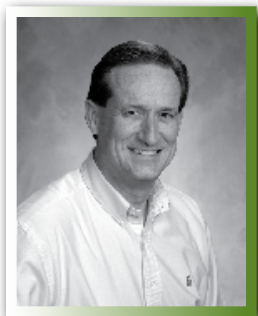




MARCH 2009
fbcmodeledo.com

From Pastor Wade



Do you remember the all-church survey from last fall? The results are in!

The survey focused on the spiritual growth that is happening

among us: what helps our faith, what could be stronger and what could be more effective. All the individual responses were put together into a big-picture summary. We did not see or receive any individual responses.

Inside this edition of *Around the Rock* you will find the essence of our church's profile.

Here are a few of the big picture results:

FBC ranks in the top 25 percent of the hundreds of churches who have participated in this survey. What does that mean? It means that the overall spiritual health of the church, as related by individual

members, is in the top 25 percent of all churches that participated in the survey nationwide.

Specifically, there was both high satisfaction and a greater yearning for understanding and interaction with God's Word. People desire to understand the Bible better, how to study, how to read, interpret and connect with God through the Scriptures.

So, we are planning to meet this need. Very soon you will be seeing opportunities for growth in this area.

Another area where there is a desire for growth is in personal prayer. Again, you will be seeing a response very soon to this desire.

These two responses are very encouraging, and it is a deep joy to respond to them.

Thank you for your participation in the survey! It helps the pastors and leaders of FBC to respond to your specific needs and desires. More to come!

Wade

by Mike Moran

Recently I've had cause to wrestle with the idea of desperation. You may be thinking what's wrong with this guy that he's thinking about such a thing? Or maybe you, too, have had a taste of desperation in your life.

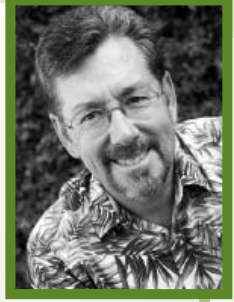
I used to love hanging out with friends at the community swimming pool in the Stockton neighborhood where I grew up. I remember one hot day when a friend thought it would really be cool to put his hands on my head and hold me under the water. The first few seconds were no problem for me, but as the seconds mounted, panic set in. Fear came over me, and a mild struggle ensued, followed by a crazed little boy punching, pinching, swinging and attacking his so-called friend. As I gasped for air, my head broke the water's surface. I was desperate.

Lately, I've been thinking

about what it means to be desperate for God. I've been asking questions like: Is desperation even something we should think about when it comes to God? Is desperation a now-and-then phenomenon that only happens when a crisis strikes? Or, could desperation really be a lifestyle? And if it is, what would it look like? How do I get there?

We'll consider these questions in the upcoming weekend series called *Desperation*. We'll meet some of the fascinating folks Jesus encountered during His life on Earth – some of whom displayed a kind of desperation for Him.

In preparing to deal with these questions, ask yourself if desperation is a frightening place you want to run away from, or could it be a place you long to dwell? Look through the Gospels, and see if there is such a thing as a healthy – even holy – desperation.



Crystal's Story

Do you believe in miracles? Crystal does.

Crystal is a single mom who lives with her five children in a Modesto neighborhood where gunshots are commonly heard. Earning minimum wage, Crystal has not been able to afford to heat her home or have hot water for the past year since PG&E turned off her gas because of an enormous unpaid bill. In the winter, she and her children sleep in the living

room near an electric space heater. She heats water on the stove for baths.

Until recently, Crystal was living her life, making things happen on her own. When, last March, she was challenged to view a film telling how to receive Jesus Christ as her personal Savior, Crystal reluctantly watched and immediately, tearfully gave her life to Jesus. Her oldest child, a son named Angel, has also become a Christian.

According to Crystal, her first

Continued on page 3

Crystal's Story Continued

miracle was being born again into God's Kingdom. She began a walk of faith as she learned to trust God for every need. Her self-sufficiency has changed into a dependence on God even in the hard times. Her former live-in boyfriend and his son have moved away to Washington. Now she and her children faithfully attend her small church at the corner of H and 6th streets. She is doing all she can to raise her children in God's ways and live her life for Christ.

Crystal's second miracle came last Christmas. Marvin Greener, a counselor at Mark Twain Junior High School and a member of Pastor Ross Paterson's men's group, watched as Angel did his best to stay out of trouble by joining the school basketball team and keeping his homework assignments current. For the past three years, Pastor Ross' group has helped various families in need, and in 2008 they chose Angel's family.

In December, Pastor Ross, Marvin and another member of Ross' group, Dan Sargis, delivered Christmas gifts and food to Angel's family. The smiles of appreciation blessed the men greatly. While there, they realized Crystal's tenuous situation. They noted that in addition to the family's need for food and Christmas gifts, they had no heat or hot water, and their electricity was soon to be turned off. With the electricity to be turned off in early January, they would not be able to use the space heater, heat water or cook. But where would that money come from?

Miracle number three arrived in January. Dan contacted his networking friends who set up Web sites where people could donate money towards Crystal's MID bill. Money came in from all over the United States, Germany and the Netherlands. One man from Lebanon wanted to send 100,000 pounds (about \$65)! By Sunday night they had received \$300. On Monday, the day the power was to be turned off, Dan called Crystal to let her know how God had provided for her family. Tears flowed. Her MID bill was paid within \$35 of the total owed. The shut-off had been averted.

Crystal recalled that when she had gone to her pastor two days earlier in a panic, he had told her to "have faith in God." When she protested, "But what am I going to do on Monday?" he kept insisting she trust God. Dan explained to Crystal that the God she had put her trust in is the same God Who uses people to meet His children's needs.

December's cold month brought another very high MID bill -- using the space heater is costly. Further, by then Crystal had lost her job. Although her family's needs are rapidly accumulating, Crystal has a new perspective about faith and trusting God. She has learned the meaning of Philippians 4:19 which reminds us that: "God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." And that's something we can all count on!

by Dan Sargis and
Jackie Tharpe

Focusing on What Matters

Elevation 2009 was an amazing experience for campers and counselors alike. God blessed our group with a weekend of blue skies, loving friends,

fun games and an incredible understanding of just how important we are to Him.

Guest speaker Chris Thielen provided rich and inspiring insight on what it takes and means to fight the ongoing spiritual battle

in our lives by using funny and clever ways to make his key points, captivating each and every person in the room. It was clear that God was moving among us.

Apart from the teaching, students entertained themselves in their free time with the wonderful activities Old Oak Ranch has to offer. If not amidst a heated ping pong tournament, one could try their hand at Pac

Man, pool, basketball, a Rock Band competition, or for the more adventuresome, paintball and a high ropes course. Saturday night, however, proved to be a definite highlight for campers with 128's annual

American Idol talent show. Students and staff were encouraged to participate with jokes, songs, dances or any type of talent for a chance to win cool prizes and a spot on the camp DVD.

The entire weekend was truly a marvelous one, offering students an opportunity to focus on what really matters beyond grades and work: building a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ.

by Connor Johnson



Connor



American Idol fun



Time for friends



Crazy Competitions



Time to just hang out

Spiritual Life Survey Results

On the cover of this edition, Pastor Wade introduces some results of last year's all-church survey. We thought you'd like to know some of the significant data that came from the survey. We're using this data to plan for the near future.

Cited by those who took the survey, here are the five top areas where help from the church is requested:

- Help me understand the Bible in-depth
- Help me develop a better prayer life
- Help me develop a more personal relationship with Christ
- Challenge me to grow spiritually
- Provide a clear pathway to guide spiritual growth

It's interesting to discover the reasons why folks first came to First B:

- 26 percent said a friend or relative invited them
- 18 percent said they were looking for a church and First B was the best fit for them
- 13 percent said they began coming because of our children's or student ministries
- 12 percent said they grew up at First B

55 percent of those surveyed are involved in some kind of small group, and the satisfaction level of those involved is 96 percent. Here are their expressed reasons for being in a small group:

- 87 percent said their group provides a safe place to process issues they face
- 86 percent said their group provides an atmosphere of trust where they can admit shortcomings and mistakes
- 65 percent said their group provides a place where they can develop genuine friendships
- 84 percent said their group holds them accountable to lead a Christian life
- 83 percent said their group provides an in-depth study of the Bible

Those are some pretty encouraging statements about small group ministry!

33 percent of those surveyed participate in a Sunday morning mid-size group. 94 percent of those folks express satisfaction with their Sunday morning group experience.

64 percent of those surveyed say they give the tithe (10 percent) to the church. Another 20 percent said they give and are working toward giving the tithe.

Our weak spot appears to be putting our faith in action, and it's an area we are working hard to improve. The three most significant issues in this area are:

- Frequency of serving in the church
- Frequency of serving those in need
- Evangelistic activities

The Spiritual Life Survey will help us target areas of need, wisely investing our resources to help believers be fully devoted to Jesus Christ. It has also been helpful in validating what is working. Thanks to all who took the time to go through the survey!

From Malaysia To Modesto: Michael Tay's Journey

Michael Tay grew up in Malaysia, the youngest of four sisters and a brother. He was a gang member, a Boy's Brigade member and a Buddhist. He thought he was in control of his life's plans but God had a better plan for Michael.



At 13, Michael joined the Boy's Brigade, an organization similar to Boy Scouts but with a Christian emphasis. He learned outdoor survival skills, first aid, marching drills to

build discipline and how to play a marching band side drum. But the most important thing he learned was about Jesus. Yet because of his Buddhist background, he never thought about accepting Jesus as his personal Savior even though two years later he felt God was calling him, a call he dismissed as "God is not talking to me."

Michael led a double life. While he was in the Boy's Brigade hearing about Jesus, he was also involved in gangs and many fights. On a particular holiday when he was 16, Michael went to the high school yard with a friend who was not a gang member. "A rival gang attacked me," he recalls, "and we had a fight, but in the midst of the fight I heard God's voice telling me to just walk away."

Michael continues, "It took me a few seconds to believe it was God talking to me, and then I also realized that if I continued to fight, I could possibly end up dead. So I walked away from the fight. To my amazement, my rivals just

let me walk away without even chasing me. At that moment, I truly believed that God was calling me to accept Christ into my life. And I did.

"My mom and I had a big disagreement because she was opposed to my becoming a Christian. She was very angry with me. We stopped talking to each other for six months. Dad didn't really care since he wasn't practicing his religion."

Two years before this incident, Michael's dream was to come to the United States for college, but his poor grades would have prevented that from happening. "Basically, I spent very few hours sleeping in, trying to get caught up with the previous two years of high school work to make sure I knew what to do in the finals. I even prayed to the Lord, Whom I had not yet received to help me with my schoolwork."

When the results of those exams were posted, Michael had graduated in the top 20 percent of the whole high school population in Malaysia! But as an ethnic Chinese, he had no chance of entering the local university. He began attending a private college while applying to universities in the United States. An acceptance letter came from Cal State, Stanislaus, so "I started the next phase by taking the TOEFL English and SAT test for foreign students. To my amazement, God helped me pass that test and allowed me to come to the States."

God blessed Michael in many ways. He and his mom reconciled a week before he left for the United States. "She died two weeks after I arrived here, but I didn't have a chance to go back for the funeral because of a lack of funds. Still, God provided for my tuition need by giving me a job in the college bookstore. While at

Continued on page 7

From Malaysia To Modesto Continued

Stan State, I met Dr. Phil Arendt, who encouraged me to be one of the founders of the first Indonesian Student Bible Study groups there. I stayed active in that group, even leading some of the studies. I graduated with a degree in business computer information systems and have always had a job.

“Not long ago, God directed me to go back to college to become a teacher. I teach fifth grade at Fremont Elementary School where I ask God to help me be a good influence for my students. Because of my past, I am able to recognize gang influence. I am able to help the students in their work habits and teach them the importance of being dependable and honest.

“God has been very gracious to me. I met my wife, Erly, who is from Malaysia’s neighboring country of Indonesia, while we were in college. He has blessed me with a son, and with a daughter who survived a two-and-a-half month premature birth. Our children were born here and Erly and I have become citizens of

the United States.”

Michael and Erly have been privileged to lead a Home Group and are now teaching the Bible to the Asian youth group who meets at First Baptist Church every Sunday morning during second hour. They also open their home to these youth every other Friday evening for fellowship. “We give them a place to be instead of spending time with kids who are a bad influence. We also mentor them on how to relate to their first generation immigrant parents who are ‘old world culture’ compared to the ‘American’ ways they have adopted.”

What started out as a life filled with gangs, fights and idolatry has become a life filled with God and His safety, security and peace. “Seeking the Lord first has become my way of life. Nothing satisfies like having Jesus in my heart. I have seen Matthew 6:33 in operation in my life and I will continue to ‘seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness’ because my life is always in need of the Lord. His plan is always what’s best for me.”

Construction Update ...

You have probably noticed that we have had some unfinished work near the Park Café and behind the Kid Country Visitor Center. We are in the process of finishing up our public utility relocation project to ready our campus for our multi-purpose building. In February MID was at work moving electrical lines and the City of Modesto was at work relocating some water connections and installing a backflow prevention unit. We anticipate that sometime

in March, on completion of these projects by the utility companies, the telephone poles will be removed on our campus and we will finish construction of a transformer enclosure behind the Kid Country Visitor Center. At that point, we will be ready to construct the multi-purpose facility when the Lord directs and the funds are available. Please continue to pray for God’s leading in the timing of our project and that the funds will come in.



MARCH 2009

Sunday Night Teaching Time

Galatians: Being Free in a Tense Time

Can you be a true follower of Christ and live totally free? Are these two paths compatible? Discover what true freedom is and how to grow strong in your faith in these uncertain times

- Sunday, 5:30 pm
- Pavilion Garden

Sunday Night Teaching Time questions?

extension 2320

Monday Night Church

Service and Meal

- Monday, Mar 9, 16, 23, 30
- 6 pm, Pavilion Concourse

Volunteer Opportunities Available

- Help with childcare, prayer partners, sign language or food service
- Sign up this weekend on your communication card or call the office

Monday Night Church questions?
extension 2350

Worship Ministries

Easter Choir Rehearsals Begin

- Thursday, Mar 12, 7-8:30 pm
- The Point, downstairs
- High school and up welcome
- Sing in Easter services
- Saturday, Apr 11, 6 pm
- Sunday, Apr 12, 9 & 10:45 am

Worship Choir

- Thursdays, 7 pm
- The Point, downstairs
- High school and up welcome

Worship Orchestra

- Thursdays, 7 pm
- Worship Center
- High school and up welcome

Worship questions?
extension 2113

Recovery In Christ

Ministries Support Groups

Substance abuse, dysfunction and dependency

Thursdays, 7 pm, Pavilion Garden

Childcare provided, birth-sixth grade

Various groups available for men and women. Our recovery ministry is designed to help people work through difficult issues that cannot be worked through alone.

Search For Significance For Women

- Thursdays, 7 pm
- Pavilion Garden

Recovery In Christ questions?
extension 2350

Dedication of Parents and Little Children

Mother's Day Weekend

- Saturday, May 9, 6 pm
- Sunday, May 10, 9 & 10:45 am
- To participate, call Matt Schrader by Monday, Apr 27

Dedication questions?
extension 2330

Church Blood Plan Available

The Gift of Life

- Please call the church office for information on how you can be a part of this plan

Blood Plan questions?
extension 2350

Membership Class

New Five-week Class

- Begins Sunday, Mar 1, 9 am
- Pavilion Garden, rm 931
- Taught by various pastors
- A basic introduction to First B and how to get connected, no need to pre-register for this class

Membership questions?
extension 2370

Believer's Baptism

Sunday, April 26

- 9 & 10:45 am
- An opportunity to express your faith in Jesus Christ publicly and allow others to share in your joy

If you'd like to be baptized, please call the church office

Baptism questions?
extension 2370

Attention Veterans

Get Together

- Saturday, Mar 7
- 8 am, Pavilion Concourse
- Coffee, doughnuts and encouragement
- RSVP by calling 521-0181 or online to Matt at mschrader@fbcmodeledo.com

Veterans questions?
extension 2330

First Impressions

An Opportunity For You To Show Hospitality

- Welcome guests and help them find their way around the church campus
- One service, one Sunday per month
- Sign up at fbcmodeledo.com or call the church office during the week for more information

First Impressions questions?
extension 2806

World Outreach

Night of Prayer For The World

- Monday, Mar 2 (first Monday each month)
- 6:30 pm, 1325 11th St

Chinese Ministry • Sunday

- 10:45 am, The Point, upstairs

Laotian Ministry • Sunday

- 10:45 am, 1325 11th St

Cambodian Ministry • Sunday

- 10:45 am, Office Bldg, rms 336 & 340

World Outreach questions?
extension 2320

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Fusion Junior High

Sundays - Center Stage

- 9 am, Chapel

Fusion Inside Out Small Groups

- Wednesdays, 6:45 pm, Chapel

Winter Camp ReCap

- Wednesday, Mar 4
• 6:45 pm, Chapel

Deeper Still - Girls Coffee Club

- Saturday, Mar 7
• Village Baking Company

Check Out Fusion Online

- fusionjrhigh.com

High School

The Deep End - Sundays

- 9 am, Pavilion Concourse

128/Fuel Groups

- Wednesdays
• 6:45 pm, Pavilion Concourse

Check Out 128 Online

- 128online.com

College Ministry

18-20 Somethings

IGNITE - Sundays

- 7 pm, Pavilion Concourse

The Word At The Plex

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8-9 pm
- 418 College Ave
- Pray, read the Word; hear how it impacts others and fits into your life

Check Us Out Online

- fbcignite.com

Student Ministries questions?
extension 2506/2508

Single Adults

Single Focus

- Sundays, 9 am, The Point, upstairs
- *Are We There Yet? Moving Towards Servanthood*

St. Patrick's Day Party

- Saturday, March 14
• 7 pm, The Point, downstairs

Fun Works

- Friday, Mar 27, 7 pm

Single Adult questions?

extension 2373

Young Marrieds & Young Families

Sundays

- 9 am, Pavilion Garden

Come check out our class as we *live life together*. We focus on biblical truths, faith, building strong families and more.

Young Marrieds & Young Families

questions?

extension 2373

Family Dynamics

Marriage • Family • Parenting

Sundays

- 9 & 10:45 am, The Point, downstairs
- *I've Misplaced Myself: When People Get Lost in Their Own Personalities*
 - *How Each Personality Tends to Survive*
 - *Who Do You Like and Why*
 - *Personalities and the Questions They Struggle With*
- A new series led by Terry Benner

Family Dynamics questions?

extension 2373

Pacesetters

Sundays

- 10:45 am, Pavilion Garden
- *Luke, Christian Ethics and Heaven, God's Great Reward*

Monthly Prayer Meeting

- Monday, Mar 2, 3:30 pm
- Office Bldg, Fireside Room

Safe Banking Seminar

- Friday, Mar 20
- 9 am-1 pm, Pavilion Concourse
- RSVP by Monday, Mar 16

Pacesetters questions?
extension 2355

Women's Ministries

Small Groups

- Call for times and locations
- Various groups available
- Groups available on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Women's Ministries questions?
extension 2316

Men's Ministries

Dirt Bikes

- Saturday, Mar 21

Men's Retreat at Chinquapin

- Friday-Saturday, Apr 25-26
- Guest speaker: Michael Pouliot
- Sign up online at fbcmodesto.com

Men's Small Groups

- Various groups available

Men's Ministries questions?
extension 2355

First B Prayer List

Pastoral Staff

Wade Estes
Senior Pastor

Paul Zeek
Executive Pastor

Tom La Core
Children's Ministries/Membership

Jeff Harmon
High School Ministries

Travis Edgerton
Student Worship Ministries

Matt Moore
Junior High Ministries

Mike Emmert
College Ministries

Mike Moran
Adult Ministries

Ross Paterson
Senior Adults/Men's Ministries

Terry Benner
Singles & Marriage Ministries

Gayleen Terry
Pastoral Ministries, Women

Cliff Sexton
Pastoral Ministries

Claude Terry
World & Local Outreach

Larry Bull
Worship Pastor

Paul Andrew
Business Administrator

Board of Deacons

Corey Acree • Greg Blount
James Davis • Ted Dickason
Curtis Grant • Sean Hulin
Dennis Hurst • Rick Myers
Randy Reeves • Dennis Smith
Steve Strand • Ben Ward

Kid Country

TPC Musical Rehearsals

- Begins Sundays, now-Mar 22
- 5:30-6:45 pm, The Point, downstairs
- For Tweenagers, grades 3-5

TPC Musical: Power Lab

- Sunday, Mar 29, 6:30 pm, Worship Center

Totally Tweenage Fun Factor

- Friday, Mar 6, 6:30-9 pm, Chapel

Good News Bible Clubs In City Schools

- You can provide prayer support, supplies or teach

Christian Martial Arts Class

- Ages 8-17
- Thursdays, 5:30-6:30 pm
- Saturdays, 9:30-10:30 am
- The Family Room
- Small monthly fee

Opportunities To Serve In 2009

- Many opportunities for you to help children learn more about Jesus
- Fill out a 2009 Kid Country helper card and turn it in Sunday

Kid Country questions?
extension 2120

Welcome New Members

*Doug & Elaine Harlan
Virginia Horton
Cliff & Connie Jorgensen
Andrew Kauffman
Derrick & Sunshine Letsinger
Wendy Lucas
Shawn & Jama Mattingly
Miguel & Wendy Mendoza
Alice Carol Uva
Christopher Uva*

fbcmodesto.com

Check Us Out On The Web

- Easy to use
- Register and even pay for camps
- Listen to weekend messages
- Find information on classes and events
- Read back issues of *Around the Rock*
- Connect with others in groups of all sizes