



Life Together

From the Pastor's Desk....

Welcome to *Life Together*, a weekly publication of the ministry staff of New Covenant Bible Church. In this newsletter, we intend to share our hearts with you in a way that will provide food for thought, cast vision for our life together as a church, and encourage you in your journey of following Jesus.

Dear New Covenant Family,

As Thanksgiving approaches, I want to ask you a simple but searching question:

What is your standard of giving?

We live in a culture that enjoys - and too often abuses - a very high standard of living. We invest enormous energy in maintaining our standard of living, all the while seeking to increase it to greater heights that seem just beyond our grasp.

Only through the gospel can a person become more concerned about his standard of giving than he is about his standard of living.

When I think about giving, my mind quickly turns to 2 Corinthians 8-9. Here we find some of the Bible's most concentrated and compelling teaching on the subject. And do you know what the key word in these chapters is? GRACE. Amazing grace. No fewer than ten times this word appears, for in Paul's theology, grace is all about giving. God so loved the world, he gave... (John 3:16). And when our hearts are captivated by the joy of his astonishing grace, we too will so love that we give.

For the Apostle Paul, the standard of giving is not a percentage - it's a Person:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9

The Apostle John likewise reasons from the self-giving sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ to the the generosity that should flow from the lives of Christ-followers:

(Continued on page 2)

Saviour: A Modern Oratorio

This year, NCBC music ministry is approaching Christmas in a unique way. We are not presenting a traditional Christmas concert.

"Saviour" is a 60 plus minute modern musical oratorio which includes a full choir, ensembles, soloists and accompanied by a beautiful multimedia presentation..

"Saviour" musically portrays the work and plan of salvation from before creation, through Adam's fall, through the reign of the kings in the Old Testament, looking ahead to the coming of Christ; his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection and rule throughout eternity. It serves as a wonderful outreach tool.

"Saviour" will be presented:

- ◆Friday, December 10 at 7:00pm.
- ◆Sunday, December 12 at 6:00pm.
- ◆The concert is FREE!
- ◆Childcare will be provided from birth to age 3.
- ◆Dessert to follow!

This is a great opportunity to share the love, hospitality, and message of the gospel and invite friends, family & neighbors to hear what Christ has done for them. We need to remember...

"For unto us a Child is born..."

**To bring glory to God
through Spirit-transformed lives
by the beauty and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ**

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Pastor's Desk continued.....

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?
-1 John 3:16-17

The fresh fragrance of giving flooded my heart last week while reading Kelly Kopic's powerful new book, *God So Loved, He Gave*. If you need a raise in your standard of giving, I'd encourage you to read it. With sentences like this one, Kopic shows us that the gospel is all about giving - and giving is all about the gospel: "There is a connection between how we understand the nails in Christ's hands and what we do with the cash in ours."

Special Christmas Offering

For our first Christmas together as a church, we will be taking up a special offering to help New Covenant Bible Church advance the gospel here in the Fox Valley and in Togo, West Africa.

Fifty percent of the funds received from the Christmas Offering will be credited toward the reduction of the deficit in our church's annual budget so that we can enter 2011 in a strong position to deepen and broaden our ministry as a church. As of Oct 31 we are operating \$29,439 under budget, while trusting that through the grace of God, giving from now until the end of the year will help cover NCBC's annual expenses.

Fifty percent of the funds will be given to support the work of our beloved missionary, Cindy McFarland, in the West African nation of Togo. Cindy and her team are industriously working to construct a hospital and ministry center in the city of Mango that will serve as a catalyst for evangelistic and church planting ministries among the Islamic Togolese. At present, only \$700,000 remains to reach the total project budget of \$5.5 million. A matching gift has been offered so that whatever funds we raise will be doubled. We want to express our strong support of the work God is doing through Cindy and her team by sending a

generous year-end offering for this vital project.

This Sunday you will be given a brochure that describes the Mango Medical Project along with a special Christmas Offering envelope. This offering will continue through Sunday, Dec. 19.

Thank You for Blessing Us

How can I conclude a letter on giving without expressing my gratitude to you for all the gifts we've received through the love of this church family? When the dark clouds of suffering descended on our family in January, the Lord assured us through his word that he would give us "treasures hidden in the darkness - riches stored in secret places" (Isaiah 45:3). Little did we know that so many of those treasures would come through relationships that were then yet to be formed - and through the blending of our two church families into a whole new community of believers who are now enjoying "life together" as New Covenant Bible Church.

Thank you for lavishing our family with countless kindnesses this year - so many delicious meals, phone calls, cards, notes of encouragement, house-cleaning visits, yard work, rides to the hospital, and creative expressions of the sacrificial love that can only flow from Christ's Cross. Thank you for the hidden work of prayer, unnoticed by men, but always under the undivided attention of our Father "who sees in secret." Kate and I do not go a day without receiving some blessing from our amazing church family. I hope you know that we love you and appreciate you. I hope you know that I am an exceedingly joyous pastor, because you are an exceptionally gracious congregation. "It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace." (Phil. 1:7)

Yours in the affection of Christ Jesus,

Pastor David Sunday

Service of Thanks and Fellowship Meal

Join us for our Sunday Evening Service on November 21 as we gather for the giving of thanks, scripture, song and personal testimony. Afterward we will share a meal of soup & pie together.

If your name begins with the letter:

A-J bring pie to serve 8-10

I-Z bring soup to serve 8-10

Please join the New Covenant family at 5:00 p.m.

Reminders:

- ◆ OK Club-Nov. 20, Noon
- ◆ Ladies Night Out-Nov. 20, 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ First Annual Turkey-Bowl! Thanksgiving Day-8:30 a.m.
- ◆ Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Christmas Sunday, Dec. 26, 10:00 a.m.
- ◆ New Year's Sunday, Jan. 2, 10:00 a.m.
- ◆ NO Sunday School Classes on Dec. 26, or Jan. 2. Classes will resume on Sunday, Jan. 9.