

A Note from the Elders

The Problem of Having a “Good Problem”

Things have changed here. When I began preaching here eleven years ago, Folsom was a medium sized church (compared with other churches of Christ) and had a reputation as a friendly, hospitable group with great singing and solid biblical teaching. At least, that was how we were perceived by those who thought positively about us. What others may have thought is not important to me.

Since that time, we have grown to become one of the largest among non-institutional churches of Christ in California. In fact, on any given Sunday it is quite possible that our attendance will exceed that of any other non-institutional church in the state, even some of the larger ones in Southern California.

The leadership here has always tried very hard to provide an atmosphere conducive to growth. We’ve done that by providing stability in doctrine and practice. Most everyone knows where we stand on issues, even the “controversial” ones like marriage, divorce and remarriage, fellowship and church discipline. As far as I know, the view on these issues taken by the leadership has never changed in the nearly thirty years of the church’s existence.

Whether people agree with us on all points or not, many appreciate the consistency and have chosen to join us in our work and worship. There are many other choices here in the greater Sacramento area. In many of those churches, the leadership takes a different view of some of the issues mentioned above. If one finds himself in disagreement with the eldership at Folsom Point on the issues mentioned above, there are several other options for membership in a local church of Christ.

So, we’ve grown and many would say, “wonderful, great, super! What a good problem to have.” And so do we. We love it! The people who have come here are

the best people in the world. It wouldn’t be the same without one of them. At the same time we need to realize that the growth has caused some changes, and not all of them are for the better.

One of the changes that most have noticed is in our singing. The volume seems to have been turned down and the quality has suffered (at least from the human standpoint of what “sounds good”). Our new building is the blame for that, almost entirely. The acoustics are not as good and, though we have many

more voices than we had at the old building (when we are all together), each of us must sing louder to be heard at the same level.

But there are some other, more serious changes that I’ve observed since we have grown to our present size. These are some things

we need to work on. First, apparently, there is an increased sense of isolation felt by some of our members. More of us, even some who have been here a long time, are more likely to say, “I do not feel part of this family.” Second, the practice of hospitality has become more group-related; that is, many in the same age group are getting together, but are not often seeking to develop relationships outside that age group. Third, the percentage of those who have chosen to participate in the public aspect of the service has slipped. It has become a serious problem in the second service to find enough men to serve (without using the same men week-in, week-out). This is ironic because one of the common complaints you hear in larger groups is that the men do not get to serve as frequently as they would like. Fourth, many feel it is fine to miss an assembly or two or even more without ever informing anyone that they will be absent. Of course, this creates havoc for those trying to find men to serve in the particular service, but also reflects an independence from the family that is not healthy, in my view.

“Somehow, we need to learn how to be a ‘big church’ with the heart and soul of that medium sized church that met in the ten building for so many years.”

Somehow, we need to learn how to be a “big church” with the heart and soul of that medium sized church that met in the tin building for so many years. That’s a tall order, though, because it takes a commitment by every member.

What can and should we do? The answer is spelled S-E-R-V-I-C-E. The common thread I see in all of these problems, is the tendency of some of us to withdraw into a comfort zone, becoming “attenders” instead of true “members.” That mentality develops when we think more about ourselves than about others. The Bible tells us we need to reverse that thinking (cf. Phil. 2:1-4).

First, we must realize that “isolation” takes two – the “isolator” and the “iolatee.” Many times the one who complains about it has done nothing to solve the problem. He expects people to come to him, invite him over, have the Bible class and the get-togethers. But has anyone ever been to his house or received an invitation from him to spend time together? No, because this person has swallowed the notion that the church exists to serve him, not the other way around. The only cure for this disease is for the man to quit being so selfish and crawl out of himself long enough to notice that he has become part of the problem, not part of the solution.

Second, we need to expand our base in terms of the age of our friends in the church. This is not a high school where freshmen only hang out with freshmen and seniors only with seniors. This is a family. It is true that most of our time will be spent with those with whom we find we have most in common. However, if that’s all we do, we are not serving the church. Jesus said if we only love those who love us in return then there is no credit in it (Luke 6). If we are serving the church, we will seek ways to serve *all* the church. At the very least, we should be able to extend some hospitality to those outside our age group.

Third, as men, we need to regenerate our interest in public service during our worship services. Of all the things we do in a given week, what is more important than worshipping God? If that is true, then what is more important than the service we render to make that worship as uplifting and meaningful as it possibly can be? Saying out loud or to one’s self that there are “a lot of men who can do the job” or that “if I don’t, somebody else will” is an indication that the worship service is not a high priority in that man’s life.

Fourth, if we are going to assume anything, we should assume that someone will miss us if we do not attend a particular service of the church. We should be just as diligent to tell someone that we will not be there as we are to inform our own physical families. If one is scheduled to serve in a public way, he should make certain his job is covered by someone else. But more importantly, we should realize that this is a family; or should be. We can only cultivate a family atmosphere when all the members of the church regard the church as a family.

Our chief example, Jesus, said that He “did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28). Paul urged us, “through love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13). It is not exaggerating to say that, in the end, we will be judged on whether or not we took these words seriously.

In other words, the way to solve the not-so-good problems that come along with the “good problem” caused by our growth, is to take it upon yourself to do your part. The solution is spelled S-E-R-V-I-C-E.

dp

Published by
The church of Christ

900 E. Natoma
PO Box 492
Folsom, CA 95630
916/608-4866

Elders

Randy Clark: 916/984-4788
Dan Hamilton: 916/984-9617
Kenneth Marrs: 916/851-9158
David Posey: 530/676-9514

Deacons

Brent Agee: 916/786-0436
Forrest Brown: 530/295-9230
David Byrd: 916/985-6564
Michael Caisse: 530/672-2902
Steve Dickey: 916/983-1071
Rich Ladd: 916/774-9048
David Main: 916/363-9580
Terry Raposa: 916/782-1140
Dane Scott: 916/631-7221
Russ Tarrant: 530/672-1748
Steve Thompson: 916/983-4170
Doug Wells: 530/672-1877

Evangelist/Editor

David Posey: 530/676-9514
david@folsomchurch.com

Services

Sunday Morning Assembly
8:30AM & 10:15AM
Sunday Evening: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Study
7:30 PM

Classes for all ages.

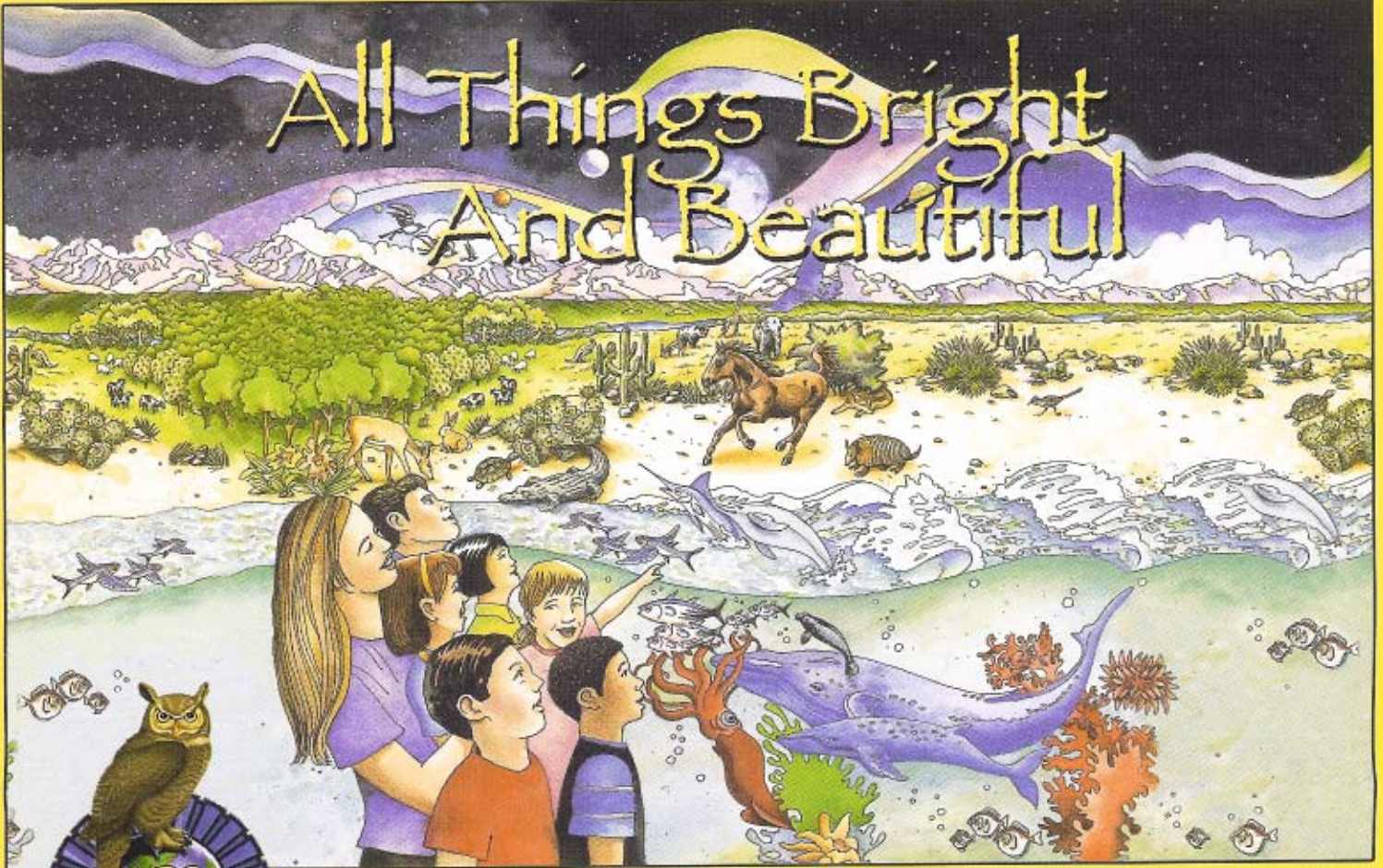
*Private classes arranged at your
convenience.*

For more information,
visit our web site at:

www.folsomchurch.com

Vacation Bible School

All Things Bright And Beautiful



You're Invited!



AUGUST 1-5, 2005

FROM 10 TO NOON each DAY

ALL CHILDREN IN GRADES K-6 ARE WELCOME!

FOLSOM POINT CHURCH OF CHRIST

900 E. NATOMA, FOLSOM, CA

WWW.FOLSOMCHURCH.COM

(916) 608-4866

