

view

September 25, 2005

This Week's Agenda

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The Lord's Day

8:30AM & 10:15 AM: SINGING, PRAYER, LORD'S SUPPER

Sermon: David Posey

4 PM – Singing

5 PM – Singing, Lord's Supper and Sermon

5:30 PM: Classes for all ages from 18 months and up

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: 7 Churches of Asia – David Posey, Jr., Jeff Clark

News & Prayer Concerns

Carly Cain has resumed chemotherapy treatments, so continue to pray for her health. Also, visit a website that is set up for Carly at www.caringbridge.org/visit/carlycain. Be sure to sign the guestbook.

Continue prayers for Dani and Brady Rembleski (lost unborn child), the Poseys (thank you!), and others who are mourning the loss of loved ones.

Continue to pray for the Ben Thorp family and many who are recovering from surgery.

Continue prayers for Nita Sellgren (Sharon Wade's mother); Sharon Jones; Duane Lowe and for all of the others who are expecting: Carly Posey, Janelle Thorp, Carrie Sadowy and Angie Cain.

Pray for Wes Shamblin's grandmother, Doris Phillips; Becky Woolpert; Kathy & Hank Wilson; Jamie Cole; and the many others who are fighting cancer: Monica Fulton (Dave's mother), Brady Rembleski's grandfather, Justin Ivie's dad, Tom Royston, Ken McClelland, Margaret Everett (San Jose), Cheryl Wilson, Laurieann Reagan and Oliver Sasse.

Continue to pray for all of our children, especially those who are just born and for our new Christians, Terri Zwahlen and her son, Kyle.

Of course, many have suffered loss due to Hurricane Katrina and many are suffering due to Hurricane Rita.

Out of Town

Becky Woolpert is in Idaho visiting Dawn.

Christians Serving in Iraq

Jeremy Allen, Philip Cain, Steve Ries, Titus Cain. Pray for these men every day.

Other Involvement Opportunities

The Ladies Workshop, a group focused on helping others, meets on the first Monday of every other month. Please see Denise Westphal for details.

Tuesday

7:30 PM – Class on Evidences

Randy Clark's Home

Wednesday

7:30 PM - Classes for all ages 18 months and up.

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Mark – Grant Mulligan, Dan Singleton
- Room 6: Bible Essentials – Dennis Wade
- Room 11-12: (Young Adults) Divorce & Remarriage – David Posey, Sr.

Group Meetings

Group meetings continue. Please arrange your schedule so that you can attend your particular meeting.

Adult Classes Next Quarter

We will have a total of four classes next quarter. Jeff Herrin and Dan Singleton will be teaching in the auditorium: Dan will be teaching Daniel on Wednesday evening and Jeff will be teaching a subject to be announced on Sunday evening. David Posey, Sr. will be teaching two classes in Room 11-12: (1) Divorce and Remarriage on Sunday nights and (2) an Evangelism Workshop class on Wednesday nights. There are a few spots open in the MDR class (many have already indicated an interest). There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the back for the evangelism class. Please sign up and/or talk to David Posey if you are interested in either class.

dp



Bible Reading

Sunday – Jeremiah 1-3; Psalm 119:169-176

Monday – Jeremiah 4-6; Psalm 120

Tuesday – Jeremiah 7-9; Psalm 121

Wednesday – Jeremiah 10-12; Psalm 122

Thursday – Reflection

Friday – Reflection

Saturday – Jeremiah 13-15; Isaiah 1-2

Survey Shows How People Share Their Faith

Research from Barna Research Group Ltd., Ventura, California

We have been discussing evangelism in our group meetings this year with the aim of improving our effectiveness in bringing the gospel to the people of Folsom and beyond. This article presents some research into how other religious folks are sharing their faith. This information may be useful as a discussion starter for future group meetings.

Most Religious Adults Proselytize

A slight majority of “born again”¹ adults – 55% – claimed to have shared their faith in Christ with a non-Christian during the prior 12 months. That figure has remained relatively constant during the past decade.

Some groups within the born again population were more likely than others to have engaged in outreach efforts. For instance, two-thirds of evangelicals (66%) had shared their faith, compared to just two-fifths (41%) of those who are associated with mainline churches. While six out of ten Protestants had shared their faith (61%), less than four out of ten Catholics (37%) had done so.

There were also some surprising regional disparities. By far the lowest rate of evangelistic activity occurred among Midwestern born again adults: just 41% of them shared their faith. Unexpectedly, the most prolific evangelizers were in the western states, where two-thirds (65%) had engaged in personal out-

reach efforts. The South and Northeast – often assumed to be the bright and dark spots, respectively, in regard to evangelistic efforts – fell in-between the extremes (58% of northeastern and 59% of southern Christians shared their faith).

Another major difference related to race. Whites were less likely to share their faith than were people from the two largest racial groups. While half of all born again whites (49%) evangelized in the past year, almost two-thirds of born again blacks (63%) had done so and three-quarters of born again Hispanics (76%) were active in spreading their faith views.

Crisis Prayer Tops Methods

The Barna survey explored nine specific approaches to sharing faith in Christ with non-believers. The most prolific method was to “offer to pray with a non-Christian who was in need of encouragement or support.” Eight out of ten Christians (78%) said they had done so in the past year. Nearly as common was an approach widely known as “lifestyle evangelism,” which was described in the survey as living in ways that would impress non-Christians and cause them to raise questions about that lifestyle. Three out of every four born again adults (74%) tried this means of outreach.

Another popular approach was to “start a discussion with a non-Christian in which you intentionally asked what they believe concerning a particular moral or spiritual matter, and continued to ask questions about their views without telling them they are wrong, but continuing to nicely challenge them to explain their thinking and its implications.” Known as “Socratic evangelism” because of its dialogical nature, seven out of ten believers (69%) said they had engaged in this approach.

About half of all believers utilized each of three alternative means of outreach. Among them was a form of moral confrontation (i.e., to “tell a non-Christian a specific behavior was inappropriate and then describe the biblical basis for your view and an alternative approach”). This moral confrontation ap-

¹ Barna’s definition of “Born again Christians” in these surveys are people who said they have made “a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today” and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Respondents were *not* asked to describe themselves as “born again.” Being classified as “born again” is not dependent upon church or denominational affiliation or involvement.

“Evangelicals” are a subset of born again Christians in Barna surveys. In addition to meeting the born again criteria, evangelicals also meet seven other conditions. Those include saying their faith is very important in their life today; contending that they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; stating that Satan exists; maintaining that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; asserting that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; saying that the Bible is totally accurate in all it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Further, respondents were *not* asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.” Being classified as “evangelical” is not dependent upon any church or denominational affiliation or involvement.

proach had been used by 50% of born again adults during the prior year. The other means were event-oriented strategies: bringing a non-Christian friend to a church service (49%) or bringing them to an outreach event (45%).

The least widely used methods were giving evangelistic literature to people (undertaken by 35%); sending evangelistic letters or e-mails to non-Christian acquaintances (21%); and preaching on the street or in other public places (11%).

Methods Varied By Segments

The preferred outreach methods varied by people groups. For instance, adults under the age of 40 (i.e., Baby Busters) were by far the most likely to practice Socratic evangelism (81% had done so)

than were Baby Boomers (64%) or older adults (62%). In fact, it was the most popular of all outreach approaches among Busters. Lifestyle evangelism was much less widely utilized by Busters than by older adults. Young adults were also the most likely to evangelize via e-mail and other personal notes, but they were the least likely to rely upon giving others evangelistic literature (e.g., tracts, brochures, booklets, etc.).

Geographically, Christians living in the West were the most likely to use a Socratic approach while those residing in the South and Midwest were the least likely to do so. On the religious continuum, that dialogical method was a favorite of evangelicals but was considerably less common among Catholics and mainline Protestants. As might be expected, this approach was also more popular among college graduates than among those without a college degree.

The survey results indicate that evangelizers have several preferred methods they rely upon. For instance, Christians who engage in moral confrontations and in passing out evangelistic literature are also more likely than other evangelizers to be involved in street preaching. Individuals who invite non-Christian friends to church services or to outreach events are also more likely to utilize evangelistic literature.

By the same token, some outreach efforts have a negative correlation with the use of other methods. People who bring friends to church with them are

much less likely than the norm to also enter into Socratic evangelism – that is, to engage the friend in a multi-episode conversation about issues or perspectives designed to cause the non-Christian to think more deeply about matters of truth and faith.

Changes in Strategy

George Barna, whose company conducted the research, noted that there is a significant change in evangelistic approaches taking place in the U.S.

“Young adults are much more likely to share their faith through ongoing discussions with friends and through e-mail and instant message conversations than

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are middle-aged and older adults,” Barna explained. “They are less likely to engage in means that their

generation finds offensive, such as street preaching or moral confrontation. The early signs suggest that the emerging generation – the Mosaics, who presently are in their early twenties down through early childhood – will continue along this vein. **Those seeking to prepare people to effectively share their faith in today’s society would advance the process by enabling young adults to carry on knowledgeable conversations about the substance of the Christian faith and how it affects all dimensions of a person’s life. The ability to relate biblical principles to current issues and personal struggles – that is, to interact beyond the level of simply ‘getting saved’ – will be crucial for the future of effective outreach efforts.”**

The Barna Group, Ltd., and its research division (The Barna Research Group), is a privately held, for-profit corporation that conducts primary research, produces visual media and books, and facilitates the healthy development of leaders, children, families and Christian ministries. Located in Ventura, California, Barna has been conducting and analyzing primary research to understand cultural trends related to values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors since 1984. If you would like to receive free e-mail notification of the release of each new, bi-weekly update on the latest research findings from The Barna Group, you may subscribe to this free service at the Barna web site (www.barna.org).

Good People

“Josh, what can we do for you?”

Allow me to give you the background for the preceding statement. David and Karen Parks are members of the congregation in Mandeville, LA. When I visited them this week they were deeply engrossed in a rather difficult task: cataloging all of their earthly belongings. Such a task was necessitated by the 4+ feet of water hurricane Katrina pushed through their home on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain, completely gutting the house. During the past three weeks they had immersed themselves in pleasurable tasks such as ripping out dry-wall, collecting any possessions and mementos they could find, and scrubbing away mold. They are now living in another “house”, a small RV parked behind the building of the North Shore Church of Christ in Mandeville.

The Parks and I discussed several items during our visit together: the process of rebuilding, the headaches of insurance companies, getting his business back up and running, and family matters. Towards the end of our conversation was when David said these astounding words, “Josh, what can we do for you?” You see, the brethren at South Bumby had sent me to help those I could, but this brother wanted to help me in return, if he could. I left the Parks’ RV that night scratching my head; how could those who lost so much still be so concerned with others?

Where I’m from in rural Alabama you still hear the phrase “good people” being used to compliment decent, hard-working, moral individuals. For instance, if my neighbor were to cut my grass when I was sick I might say something like “you know Bill is good people.” However, “good people” isn’t adequate to describe my brethren. They are the best.

My brethren are the best. They open their homes to young preachers, even though they are without power and five trees had hit their house only a couple of weeks ago.

My brethren are the best. They may not be able to travel and help clear trees, etc. but they make sure that those who can are well supplied with trucks, chain saws, gas, and cash.

My brethren are the best. They give their generators and window ACs to their brethren in storm ravaged areas, even though they live in hurricane prone areas themselves.

My brethren are the best. They travel from across the country, and sometimes from other countries, to help brethren they have never met before, but since they are “brethren” that is all that matters.

My brethren are the best. They give vast amounts of money to help their brethren rebuild their lives, even when they are on fixed incomes and in low paying jobs themselves.

My brethren are the best. They live in far-away countries such as Russia and are relatively poor, yet they offer their prayers and show their concern for their much wealthier American brethren.

My brethren are the best. They remind me of the saints in Macedonia because “they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.” (2Cor. 8:5, NKJV)

My brethren are the best, and I give thanks to God for them, even as the apostle Paul gave thanks for his brethren. “Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:” (Eph. 1:15-16, NKJV)

Praise God for brethren!

Joshua Creel

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

Elders

Randy Clark: 916/984-4788
Dan Hamilton: 916/984-9617
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: 916/686-1819
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

The View contains news and articles of interest to the members of the Folsom Point church of Christ. Announcing an activity or event does not necessarily imply that we financially sponsor the event or that the elders specifically endorse every component of that event, since it may not fall under the direct oversight of the elders. The church’s work and the elders’ oversight is limited by Scripture. We will not announce events that are primarily social in nature. However, we do want to publicize those activities that provide an opportunity for you to be a more involved and active member of the body.

Editor