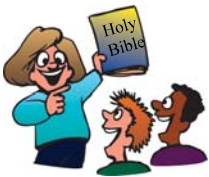




*A Great Place To Grow in
Christ
For the Entire Family*

March 19, 2017
This Weeks Events
Today: 10:00AM: (Grange)— <i>Bible 101: Matthew 7</i> —Pastor 11:00AM: (Grange)— <i>Dinner with a Pharisee</i> —Pastor 6:00PM: (Grange)— <i>Advanced Bible: Regeneration</i> —Pastor
Upcoming Events
July 9, 2017: <i>MISSIONARY TO GREENLAND</i> —J.R. Wright Family



Children's Church and nursery services are available for every service.

NOW I BELIEVE

Pastor Jackson used this story to illustrate the point of belief in his Sunday morning homily. An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing when suddenly his boat was attacked by the Loch Ness monster. In one graceful flip, the legendary beast tossed the atheist high into the air. Then it opened its mouth to swallow both the man and the boat. As the man sailed head over heels, he cried out, "Oh, my God! Help me!"

Immediately, the ferocious attack scene froze leaving the atheist hanging in mid-air. Then a booming voice came out of the clouds "I thought you didn't believe in me!"

"Come on, God, give me a break," the man pleaded. "Two minutes ago I didn't believe in the Loch Ness monster, either!"

To Keep in touch with your church community, on your cell, send the word: **GBCLIST** in a text to **84576**

CHURCH GROWTH



Ron Coale

More and more churches are struggling to survive. Churches in this situation can either: revive or die. Revival is not impossible because “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

There are unique gifts that a struggling church can offer. They can only be manifest if the congregation is willing to step into unfamiliar territory by committing to change. When God’s people give up the things that hold them back from doing something for God, blessings will begin to flow.

Pray

If a church is to discern the direction Christ is calling them to go, they need to be in constant prayer for strength, and vision. Not only should you pray for your church goals to be met, but you should pray that God will show you how you can be a part of reaching those goals. No job is too small or insignificant when dealing with life or death matters. Each prayer you pray should have some element of outreach in mind. Prayer is key to all church growth.

Personality

What is your personality as a congregation? It is true that a congregation will attract likeminded people, instead of people whom they wish to become more like. Be not deceived: visitors can tell if a church is being authentic to who they really are. If you are a church of young, dynamic people, a dynamic church personality will shine through.

If you are an outgoing church, an outgoing church personality will show. If you are a reserved, “us four and no more” type of person, then this will be the personality of your church.

To change the personality of your church, you must first change your own outlook. If you want visitors, then invite people. Invite them to church. Invite them to sit with you. Invite them to your house. The Bible says, “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly...” (Pro. 18:24). Don’t expect your church to grow until you first show yourself friendly.

Leadership

It doesn't matter how good the leader is if there are no followers. There may be times when parishioners are uncomfortable with some of the new changes in worship, ministry, or vision, but at some point, there needs to be a step of faith, trust, and willingness to allow the pastor and the leadership of the church to actually *lead* the church in a future direction. A church can never grow without some faithful, trusting, and committed followers who trust God has given them the right leadership.

Gossiping, belittling and undermining the leadership of your church is a faithless act of mistrust in God. God gives the leadership that He desires for your church to have. Complaints in leadership should only be directed to God because God is the only one who can do something about it correctly.

Vision

The primary barrier to church growth is lack of vision. Do you really want to

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The Johnsons

Missionaries to the "Children of the Dragon" in Mainland China



Dear Folks,

We've been having Internet connectivity email problems. Sometimes all we can do is access the inbox, but none of the messages will open and sometimes we can read messages, but not compose them. It should start getting better since Spring Festival and Lantern Festival have both ended. We no longer have fireworks going off all night.

The families we work with have also been traveling since during Spring Festival, there is almost a requirement that everyone go back to their hometowns to visit their families. We did not travel during the holiday because the trains, planes, and buses are all super-packed during this time.

Shops and restaurants are also starting to open back up. During this holiday, most of the shops and restaurants close for at least a week or two, but not necessarily at the same time. There is one week, though, when almost everything is closed. We stocked up on drinking water (tap water is not drinkable in China), and food for the holiday so we were covered. It still seems rather strange to see everything closed up though.

Carolyn is walking again. She was able to leave the apartment yesterday for the first time in a couple of months without her cane. The swelling in her foot has improved as well, but some movements and uses of the foot are still limited. She is also able to be on her feet more which is good.

She's hoping to be able to get the results back on the inflammation tests now that the hospital is opened again, but the doctor wasn't sure what would cause the swelling and pain since it wasn't a broken bone. We're assuming it is somehow related to her fibromyalgia. But, PTL, she is able to walk again.

We've printed some book study materials for the ladies and are looking forward to sharing those this week with them.

School will start in a couple of weeks so once everyone has their schedules, we'll decide on a study time that will work so everyone can come.

Carolyn Johnson

Writer, mixed media and fiber artist, proofreader

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grow? If the answer is yes, then you must commit to this vision and be willing to accept changes.

For a church to grow, there needs to be an incredible unselfishness. You must be willing to die to some traditions, feelings, or relationships in order for the Kingdom of God to be advanced. In short, it takes a willing and giving heart. This equates to a lot of maturity.

Everything done should be visibly clear and understood by the entire congregation. When asking a random church member, they should be able to say in a few short sentences what the mission of the church is, and it should be visibly obvious and evident.

A vision of the church should be something that the church can grow into. It doesn't necessarily have to be all figured out, but it must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of the community. Therefore, a church can go from primarily being a children's ministry to a ministry reaching young couples. The vision must be not so rigid that it cannot adapt.

Personal invitations

The invitation of a friend or family member is still the most effective form of reaching people and introducing them to church. Regular calls to the brethren about inviting people is encouraging.

Small groups that are open to connecting people are a good way to reach people with an invitation to attend church.

It needs to become habitual. Inviting others should be built into our DNA. Members should pray regularly and be

sensitive to opportunities to invite people to church. You never know which complete stranger will show up because of an invitation given at a random encounter.

Hospitality

Serve church visitors and guests with honor. Hospitality plays a big role in shaping a visitor's decision to return and get involved. Greet visitors when they come, visit with them after the service, and most of all, remove the unnecessary barriers that keep visitors from making that second visit. Take opportunities to pray with guests before they leave. This often opens the door for God to work and for guests to notice that God is concerned about them as well.

Mission

What is your church doing to be an agent of transformation in the community? Churches with a mission of sharing their faith have an attraction for people who want to do something with their lives, not just attend a monologue bracketed by a few songs.

“What is your church known for in the community?” If your answer is: “We have a great music program” then people who don't play an instrument, sing well, or enjoy their style of music, have no place to be involved and won't return. If a church is tutoring kids, sharing food with the hungry, building affordable housing, cleaning up the streets, mentoring work-release people – then there is plenty to be involved in which makes your church appealing.

If you've got a great mission in the community, you've got a reason for people to come back and get involved.

~



Robert and Sherah Trump Missionaries to Germany

Make ye mention to the nations. . . Jer. 4:16



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

February 2017

February was the shortest and longest month of the year. Between the spiritual warfare, the normal workload, and the extra English classes that I took on solely for the month of February, I believe that I told Sherah, “Hi”, a couple of times at least. Even so, the word of God has worked mightily in my life of late and I’ve had a blast sowing the seed these last few months.

Getting right into it: No sooner had I written the last prayer letter than an upset arose in Hristo’s new life in Christ. On the day that Hristo got saved, I told him that Satan would be after him and that he would start to experience some strange things in his life. A week later, he called and begged me for a large sum of money, so that he could travel to Bulgaria and see his grandmother who was in a coma. I finally told him, “No”, after getting no peace about it in prayer. He affirmed that this wouldn’t come between us, but it was obvious that he was offended.

Over the next two weeks, we had frequent contact by phone, but he remained depressed and offended and continually agreed to tentative appointments to meet up and study the Bible only to cancel every time. Within the same week that his grandmother went into a coma, his mother became even more ill and now has to go in for dialysis 3-4 times a week until she dies, “which”, said the doctor, “won’t be much longer.” Between the unfortunate events that occurred in his life and the tension that arose between us, I’d say that the Devil is still on the clock. **I prayed and still pray ardently that this 19-year-old kid would not fall away, though the odds are stacked against him.**

I decided to focus on Hristo’s brother Emil and his wife Nushka, whom I met and witnessed to the previous month. We invited them over, but they didn’t want to commit to a date, always telling me that they would call me last minute to inform me if they would be coming on such and such a date. Every time they cancelled. This seems rather normal in their culture. I then paid them a surprise visit one Sunday evening and Nushka gladly received me. They had company, Elvis and his wife Eva, and we all talked for a while, but because of the situation, it was mostly light conversation. **Please pray for the salvation of Emil and Nushka as well as Elvis and Eva. I need to get Emil alone and spend time with him if he is to understand and believe the gospel.**

Hristo came somewhat around and called me to ask if we could meet up, for we hadn’t seen each other in a while. We set up a time on a Sunday evening and I was invited to come and talk with one of Hristo’s interested friends from Bulgaria, Bobi. I spent a couple of hours answering Bible questions, explaining also parts of the gospel. **Bobi has a ways to go before accepting Christ. Pray for his conviction and salvation.**

After the meeting, though, Hristo seemed to be supercharged again and back into the fight. Then he got a job, and now finding time to meet with me is an even harder task. **Please pray for Hristo to mature as a man and as a Christian as well. He’s still one to stay up all night and be unable to meet on Sunday morning. Between being 19 years old and immature, he has a job now and is finding it hard to do anything else. We’ve talked a little about faithfulness over the phone and how important learning the Bible is for his relationship with Jesus Christ, but quite frankly he needs to man up mentally as well as spir-**

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PRAYER REQUESTS

607.	Pastor	Souls saved in Shelton.
680.	Matt	Savings Account (Building fund) to reach —(\$10,000).
685.	Dee P.	Dee's brother Duane (a proud atheist) salvation.
755.	Regina	Grace Baptist Church to grow in influence & membership.
763.	Sally	Brother Nathan called to preach. Strength & direction.
796.	Regina	Strength for God's will in her life.
803.	Dee P.	Improved church attendance for her family.
849.	Sally	Jonny seeks God's will in making decisions for future.
865.	Dee P.	Son Joseph's health problems & depression.
867.	Dee P.	Family members to read KJB daily.
973.	Dee	Protection for Stephanie working as a nurse.
975.	Dee P.	Brother-in-law George stage 4 terminal lung cancer
976.	Dee P.	Our Christian men to grow as spiritual leaders in our homes, churches and communities.
1013.	Duane K.	Ben's Salvation.
1014.	Tom	Sisters wisdom and comfort in dealing with cancer decisions.
1017.	Kail	Friends healing from stroke.
1018.	Kail	Friend Zach is in lockup.
1021.	Pastor	Friend Victor Paloino's wife died. Comfort.
1023.	Pastor	Regina's health and recovery.
1024.	Pastor	Larry's successful surgery and recovery.
1027.	Pastor	Sister Regina needs encouragement.
1028.	Pastor	Ramona Gullett in hospital.
1029.	Pastor	Mike McCombie oncology report.
1030.	Machen	6 year old Azreal's brain tumor surgery.

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itually. He called me while writing this letter and told me that he wanted to meet up and that he felt bad that we hadn't seen each other in over a week. He made it a point to say, "Don't forget it: I think all the time about learning the Bible with you."

Hristo's grandmother Trena is out of the coma, yet unable to walk. Hristo will attempt to get the money to visit her in a week or so. She's probably not saved. Hristo's mother Vera is dying and isn't saved to my knowledge, nor his father Mitko.

We had fallen somewhat out of contact with **Oscar, Julia, and Leonore**, but have lately been in contact again. **Please pray that all three of them would get saved soon.**

I haven't been meeting with Branko for months, owing to his utter disinterest in hearing about the Bible. He wanted to hang out for a couple of hours every Wednesday, get

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