ARISE AND BUILD COMMUNITY PROJECT = FELLOWSHIP AND EVANGELISM

by Ken Norton

As the pastor that oversees Fellowship and Adult Sabbath Schools, I am very excited about this building project. When I think about us adding additional space to our facility, I think of two things - Biblical Community and Personal Evangelism. Here's why.

Several years ago, while pastoring the Apopka Church, our local church leadership came under the conviction that there was something missing from the way we were doing church. We wanted the church to be a place where people could experience true fellowship and community, something far beyond the “Happy Sabbath” handshakes. We were praying for something transformational that would allow people to really connect on a personal, spiritual level with one another.

At a church board meeting it was decided to utilize every possible space in the church to allow for more Sabbath Schools to start. These Sabbath Schools would be in a small group format and could be started by any church member. We spent $8000 purchasing soundproof dividers that were mobile and could be moved to different open areas of the church for classes to meet. At the beginning of the process I made a major mistake by trying to divide up a large,
established Sabbath School class into small groups. That class had an attendance of 40-50 people. I have a small grey patch of hair as a memorial to that attempt. In retrospect, it was a foolish mistake but also an amazing learning lesson. God clearly impressed me during that time, “Ken, don’t try to disrupt the bond and community that I have already built that holds this large Sabbath School class together. Start new smaller classes. Reach out to those who aren’t going to Sabbath School anywhere. Leave the current Sabbath Schools alone.” So that’s what we did. Within several months three new Sabbath Schools started that eventually grew to 10-15 members each.

It was during the growth of these classes that two experiences took place that changed the way I view ministry on a local church level. The first experience taught me about the connection between fellowship and Sabbath School. My wife and I decided to start the first small group Sabbath School. After several weeks I felt impressed to leave her in charge of that group and start a second group, a new believers class. One Sabbath I went to find Julie after class and was pulled aside by one of the members of her group. I can still remember the lady’s expression and the intensity of her voice as she said, “Pastor, I want you to know I don’t care who preaches each Sabbath morning. I have finally found what I have been looking for. I come to church. It’s something I look forward to all week!” Something struck me from her comment. She had found what millions of people were looking for. True community! People want a safe place where they can talk about God with others and connect on deep spiritual level. I felt that God was revealing to me the importance of having both small group Sabbath Schools as well as larger classes.

The second experience had to do with Sabbath School and evangelism. After starting the new believers class, a long time church couple joined the group because of their desire to get back to the basics and renew their spiritual growth. After a few weeks the husband invited his unchurched brother to the class. The next week, the brother’s wife came along with their three children. They invited a cousin who attended the week after. Soon several extended family members came. Long story short, in a matter of few months there were four baptisms from that class.

The class formed an incredibly warm Christian bond that became a magnet for others who were looking for a real experience with God as they journeyed together towards Him. We have the opportunity with this Collegedale Church expansion project to have a hundred stories be told that would have never been - stories of revival, renewal, reconsecration, and repentance all because we as a church family provided the needed space for God to use Sabbath School as a vehicle for real Biblical community and evangelism. Currently, we do not have any more useable space for new Sabbath Schools to start, even though there are church members ready to start new classes.

I’ve seen God revitalize a church through Adult Sabbath Schools and believe God wants it to happen again – right here. That’s why we as a pastoral team are passionate about this project. I appeal to you as a church family to dream with us about stories that will be told that will include each one of us as we journey toward God together and invite others into warmth of His fellowship.

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of fun by filling out a form at the VBS booth in the atrium on Sabbath or by downloading a form on line at the church website and turning it in to the church office.

All volunteers should plan on attending one of the following two VBS Training sessions in the church activity room (located in the Junior classroom on the 1st floor level): Tuesday, July 8, from 7:00-8:00 p.m. OR Wednesday, July 9, from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

All parents should also plan to reserve the date of Sunday, July 13, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. to stop by the church for final VBS registrations and to purchase a T-shirt and CD for any children attending.

Make your plans now to join us for this fun tropical island adventure!!
FAMILY LIFE

Our modern culture tells us cohabitation is a great alternative to marriage and divorce is a convenient solution to difficulties—consider what some current research reveals:

www.frc.org/marriwebsite/162-reasons-to-marry

Married mothers report less depression, more support from their partners, and more stable relationships than cohabiting mothers.

Engaged? Build a marriage to last a lifetime through thorough preparation! Contact Pastor Tim at timcross@southern.edu six months prior to wedding for more information.

IN MEMORY

Pamela C Rhodes, wife of Jimmy Rhodes and mother of Deborah Vollberg, Jimmy Rhodes, and Rondi Oswald, passed away June 10. Services were held June 14.

Roland Ewald, husband of Mae Ewald and father of Kathie Christiansen, passed away June 11. Services will be held in Michigan.

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY!

Mr. William E. Johnson celebrated his 90th birthday, Memorial Day Weekend, with wife Patricia, their children and families, at the family home near Collegedale. Mr. Johnson is a Word War II veteran and is retired from McKee Baking Company. He has 4 children, 8 grandchildren, 4 great grandchildren.

JUDY LUSTER TO SPEAK AT 55+ CLUB

The 55+ Club of the Collegedale area will meet Sunday, July 13, at noon in the Fellowship Hall. A vegetarian potluck dinner will be served and the program which follows at 1:00 will feature a presentation on The Civil War in the Chattanooga Area by Judy Luster, Children's Librarian at the Collegedale Public Library.

Born in Memphis, Mrs. Luster graduated from Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis) in Child Development under the Home Economics Department. Living in various places where her husband’s work assignments took them, including Ohio, Texas and China, she homeschooled her four children from kindergarten through high school. The program is open to the public. Those wishing to attend the meal may make a reservation by calling club president Ralph Neall at (423) 396-2212.

Food assignments: A-B: Vegetables; C-G: Potatoes, pasta or rice; H-M: Dessert; N-R: Entrees; S-T: Bread, rolls or sandwiches; V-Z: Tossed, macaroni or potato salad. Please bring by 11:30.

Photo by Ryan Glick
COMMUNION will be held June 28. The ordinance of humility will be observed in the Fellowship Hall on a continuous basis from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Worshipers are invited to arrive at least twenty minutes before the service of their choice at 8:45, 10:15, or 11:45 a.m., and take part in the foot-washing ceremony.

THANK YOU for all the calls, cards, and visits for Gordon Hyde, especially to Bill Seth and Ernest Clark who came weekly to sing and pray with him. His memorial service will be August 16, at 4:00 p.m. at the Collegedale Church. Bradley and Sylvia Hyde

A FREE HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMUNITY FAIR will be held in the McDonald Road Church Gym on Sunday, July 13, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Many exhibits and products for sale, herbs and natural remedies, Juicing for Health, amazing charcoal uses, check blood pressure and body mass index, ask the doctor, essential oils, child eye disease site screening, gardening, skin cancer screening and education, experience chair massage, fresh local healthful produce, ask the dietitian, hydrotherapy, healthful lifestyle counseling, diabetes screening and education, and much more by experienced presenters. Contact Dorothy Walters at 236-4893.

SOUTHERN invites high school students with a passion for media to apply for the Christian media camp, July 28-30. Students will gain hands-on experience with media, alongside faculty and staff in the School of Journalism and Communication. Students will leave better prepared to work on yearbooks, videos, newspapers and other media. Cost is $60/student and includes lodging and meals. Visit southern.edu/journalism or call (423) 236-2330.

ENJOY FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT with friends and neighbors, Sunday, June 29, at 6:00 p.m., at the Lester Coon Adventist School gymnasium, 11429 Bates Road, Apison, sponsored by the Apison Allies Pathfinder Club. Free Admission. Snacks available for purchase. Bring a blanket. Call (423) 236-4214 for more information.

CONNECT LAWN WARRIORS: Would you like to serve community members who need temporary help maintaining their lawns? We are building a group that lends a hand when someone faces medical issues, a death, or another circumstance necessitating temporary help with lawn care. Contact Deanna Moore at dmoore@southern.edu.

ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL EDUCATION: Are you looking for an alternative to the traditional brick and mortar classroom? Consider online and correspondence learning. Alternative education is beneficial for students who struggle in school, are advanced learners, homeschoolers, on a college and career path, belong to military families, have medical or health issues, need a smaller classroom setting, or benefit from working at his or her own pace. Our school provides Adventist education needs for students in grades 8 – 12. The courses are accredited. Call Angela Coney at (704) 890-0276, for further information.