



August 2018

CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

3950 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546 • 616.949.5690

Website has launched!

Look at us now !!!

Do you know what Pastor Bob Manuel is saying about *you*?

Take a look at CrossWay's newly launched website at www.cwcgr.org.

You will find a welcoming community of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ ... sermons and blogs by both Pastors Bob ... a clear presentation of the Gospel ... and so much more.



You can enjoy the website for yourself and use it as a means of inviting others to check out our church, our fellowship and our glorious Message.

Now that you've interrupted your reading of *CrossWay Current* long enough to check out the website, send the pastors your feedback via fefc@sbcglobal.net or have a chat with them on a Sunday morning.

And visit the website — early & often!



Remember when this was our front door? The main entrance to the church, just off the west parking lot? As you can see, this entrance is closed off ... for now.

Parking during construction

We hope you have by now become accustomed to parking near the north (Burton Street) entrance and entering the building at the north door while construction proceeds on our addition. Please park accordingly and note that the dentist's parking lot (up a slight hill to the west) is available for our use on Sunday mornings. We thank Advance Dental Smile



***Put it on your calendar NOW!
Luis Palau's CityFest comes
to downtown G.R. Sept. 8-9!***



This is the entrance to CrossWay these days ... the north door. Park at north and enter at north. Come on in!

Coming up at CrossWay Community

- Every Sun. 10 a.m. Worship together
- Every Thurs. 6:30 p.m. Small group @ Hinkles
- Aug. 2, 9, 16 6:15 p.m. *Wholyfit* exercise (church hosting)
- Aug. 4 1 - 4 p.m. Anita S. open house
- Aug. 5 11:30 a.m. Special congregational meeting
- Aug. 11 10 a.m. Weekly revival prayer resumes
- Aug. 11 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Neighborhood block party @ Camelot Park
- Aug. 18 9:30 a.m. CityFest* prayer tent training @ Discovery CR Church, GR
- Aug. 19 10 a.m. Missionaries Marlan & Mercedes Olson attend CrossWay worship
- Aug. 21 7 p.m. CityFest* prayer tent training @ Gold Avenue Church
- Aug. 26 6 p.m. Monthly prayer hour


* *CityFest* is the evangelistic festival of the Luis Palau Assn., being planned for Sept. 8-9 in Grand Rapids.

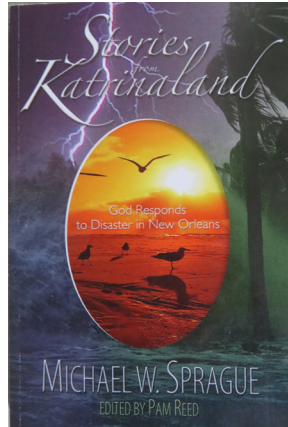
New to the CrossWay library

A hurricane becomes a blessing? How can that be? When its aftermath reveals the love of God.

Thirteen years ago this month, God's power was on full display in greater New Orleans, and an Evangelical Free Church pastor there documented daily miracles that put God's loving restoration on display.

CrossWay's Pam Reed compiled Pastor Michael Sprague's website blog posts for 11 months, publishing his stories in time for the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

Stories from Katrinaland: God's Response to Disaster in New Orleans is a self-publishing bestseller which reads like a daily devotional and shouts encouragement from every page. You will find it uplifting when you borrow this paperback from our church library. 



Reaching up ...

Back on our knees

New time, same place. It's time to resume our storming of heaven for a reawakening in our church, our city, our nation.

Join us for a weekly hour of prayer at 10 a.m. Saturdays in the CrossWay conference room, beginning Aug. 11. You will be blessed, as you bless our congregation.

Construction financial forecast



Our \$ goals and timeline goals ...

Sanctuary air conditioning **\$2,990 by 6/2019**

Phase I renovations of existing bldg. \$35,000 by 6/2020

Phase II existing bldg. renovations \$35,000 by 6/2021

CrossWay Community Mission Statement:

God has called us to make disciples of Jesus Christ who respond to His Gospel by committing ourselves to loving God, one another and the world in Christ's name.

Reaching out ...

Serving our neighbors

Last month Cross-Way Community blessed 96 neighborhood children with a week of fun and spiritual nourishment at the Vacation Bible School, held at nearby Church of the Servant.



Thanks to CrossWay folks who brought various materials to assist primarily in the crafting activities.

Thanks also to Annie Tabasco, who helped serve snacks, and to Becky Alves, who organized Cross-Way's participation and led a devotion during the week.

Let's keep serving

One tangible way the Camelot Community Partnership, to which CrossWay belongs, can serve our neighbors is to equip the children with backpacks filled with school supplies as we approach the new school year.



Our part in this joint endeavor is to supply the No. 2 pencils, blue pens, and black pens. Please make your purchases and bring your donations by Sunday, Aug. 5, to bless the children. Backpacks will be distributed at the block party on Aug. 11.

Anita's having a party ...

And we're all invited! Our friend is taking a year in the U.S. to be with her new husband Peter while he finishes an advanced academic degree.

She's holding an open house in our fellowship hall on Sat., Aug. 4, from 1 to 4 p.m. to greet friends from CrossWay and beyond. You're invited to join the festivities and add to them by bringing a pie to share. Let's welcome her back and meet Peter as well.

Anita will be giving a brief report during our worship service the next day.

This message
from Pastor Bob Funk

The Committed Christian: The Bible Speaks

Last month I shared an excerpt from *The Greatest Things — Loving God and Living Well as a Committed Christian*. It was entitled, “Our Commitments Matter to God.” What follows is some of the Biblical teaching that informs that claim. Perhaps these Scriptures can help us to reflect upon our life priorities as we look to the past and make any needed adjustments for the future.

The Bible and Commitment

“By Your words I can see where I’m going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path. I’ve committed myself and I’ll never turn back from living by Your righteous order.” (Ps.119:105 MSG)

Our commitments really do matter to God. Again and again, and in a variety of ways, the Christian Scriptures speak about this issue of commitment:

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen **those whose hearts are fully committed** to Him.” (2 Chronicles 16:9)

“**But your hearts must be fully committed** to the Lord our God, to live by His decrees and obey His commands, as at this time.” (1 Kings 8:61)

“**Commit your way to the Lord**; trust in Him and He will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.” (Ps.37:5-6)

“**Commit to the Lord whatever you do**, and your plans will succeed.” (Prov.16:3)

The call to commitment comes to us from One who will acknowledge no competitors. For instance, the Ten Commandments begin with these exclusive words:

“And God spoke all these words: ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. **You shall have no other gods before Me.**’” (Exodus 20:1-3)

The One who spoke these words calls for an exclusive commitment to love and serve the Lord.

Jesus Christ also called for a serious commitment. While living on earth, He called for total allegiance, trust and obedience. He continues to call us today to a commitment that may require our leaving some people, pleasures and pursuits behind. For instance, He promised His committed followers:



“...Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.” (Matthew 19:29)

“Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me... ” (Matthew 10:37-38)

Jesus made clear the sacrificial nature of the commitment He was calling for in His followers:

“If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the Gospel will save it. For what good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:34-36)

The commitment to which God calls us is meant to embrace all that we are, as well:

“Love the Lord your God with **all your heart** and with **all your soul** and with **all your strength** and with **all your mind.**” (Luke 10:27)

In addition to these words of Jesus Christ, the call to commitment comes through the words of the Apostles. The Apostle Paul implored his fellow Christians, saying:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to **offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God...” (Romans 12:1)

John is not at all shy about his inspired call to commitment:

“The man who says, “I know Him,” but does not **do** what He commands is a liar and the truth is not in him... This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him **must walk as Jesus did.**” (1 John 2:4-6)

These and other passages from the Bible can sound like severe, stern and daunting demands. However, we must understand them within the overall context of the Bible. **The Biblical story is about God’s love and grace revealed to us in history and ultimately in and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.** It is an invitation not just to commitment, but also to love and life in God’s eternal family.

May the *love* and *grace* of God inspire us to respond faithfully and joyfully through the commitments we make as blessed members of God’s eternal family!



*This message
from Pastor Bob Manuel*

A Growing Hope

No, my hope is not drawn from the fact that I'm not alone in this struggle, but my hope is in our Sovereign Good God, who gives me hope and a sense of laughter in my life.

This hope, ultimately, is not a "thing" but a Person (Titus 2:13). The son of promise was not finally Isaac but Jesus Himself. I've been reminded in my study of Genesis 18:1-15 this week of all these things. Oh, how we need to digest the story of Isaac, whose very name means laughter!

One commentator said of Sarah, "She laughed to herself, not daring to hope that what was promised might be true."

You see, we get afraid to hope because we are so used to the false narrative we have been listening to, the stories we tell ourselves — that we are beyond hope. And we think (rightly, I might add!) that we will not be able to sustain our hope.

It's true. We cannot sustain our hope. We are not meant to, because our hope does not lie in ourselves. It's beyond us. Given to us.

Abraham and Sarah's story tells us the truth not just about ourselves (apart from Jesus's intervention, we are hopeless), but about our Good God who asks us, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:14)

So while I could say so much more, will you who reads this, who might struggle with occasional or even frequent depression, dare to hope again?

I could close with a cliché like, "Life is hard, but God is good" — and that would be true! Yet, my biggest hope (no pun intended!) is that you would believe, deep down into the recesses and wrinkles of your soul, that He's got this! This life of yours. This pain you hold. Your fragile soul.

He. Loves. You. And nothing is too hard for our God. Place your "impossibilities" (Gen. 19:14) into His capable hands.

Two words I'll share with you this month seem almost contradictory to one another: Depression and Hope.

Now, I don't want this month's brief article to be so much about "depression" or a sense of melancholy or whatever you might want to call it. And I don't want any of you to worry, thinking I walk around in a constant state of depression, because I don't. Yet, as some of you know, the combination of my family history, life experience and temperament make it perhaps easier for me to experience depression than I wish were true.

I want to share with you, mainly, my hope.

It seems the last few years, I have been experiencing a more consistent sense of hope. My hope is growing, not because I have talked with many in our congregation who also struggle with depression. And my hope is not in the well-known fact that many in Scripture also had a steady sense of sadness.

Consider David (Ps. 38:4), Elijah (I Kings 19:4), Job (Job 30:15-17), Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14, 18), and yes, even Jesus (Isa. 53:3).

I suppose some of you may be offended that I suggest Jesus might have struggled with depression, even though it might have been short-lived. But I believe, while Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness (Heb. 1:9), He also knew, like no one else, the depths of sadness our human condition can bring, and not just a sadness felt as a one-time event on the cross. Yet, that's a subject for a whole other article!

Also, many of our great Christian leaders in history have been effective servants of Jesus even while they struggled with varying degrees of depression. One of my heroes, Charles Spurgeon — while known for his hearty humor and playfulness — struggled with great periods of depression.

Reaching out . . .

Not exactly a ‘summer vacation’!

When Julia Stevens learned some of her friends from Christ Church Presbyterian were going to take the Gospel to adolescents in Costa Rica, she started raising support for her own participation in the week-long June mission trip, and what an experience it was!

Working and staying at the Young Life camp in Coronado, a highlands area in San Jose province, she and some 30 high school students and 11 adults powerwashed and painted cabins, leveled a gravel field and put up a tent for local young campers to play games in, built steps up a hill leading to the staff cabin and primed and painted the wooden dining hall, leaving a lasting mark on the missionary camp.



When Julia and the team weren't applying their physical skills, they visited downtown San Jose on a Costa Rican budget, stayed with local host families and attended a Young Life club meeting, hearing the translated testimony of a Young Life staff member, who Julia says was “extremely passionate about the scripture he read and what he had to share,” a life-changing experience through participating in Young Life. She and her colleagues traveled through San Jose neighborhoods, learned about the Young Life college ministry while visiting the Universidad de Costa Rica and visited a soccer field built by Christ Church's team on a previous mission trip.

A real highlight was the club meeting where high schoolers gave their testimonies of coming to know the Lord through Young Life.

“Prior to the trip,” says Julia, “I wondered if short-term missions were really worth it ... if eight days could even make a difference in the whole scheme of the ministry. But I knew I had to find out for myself. After seeing how much we accomplished at the camp (thanks to the Lord) and how much we encouraged the church there as a whole and were encouraged by the church there, I realized that any amount of time — even just one conversation, one smile to a kid in the camp, any amount of time you devote to the Lord — is time well spent. Now I am fully convinced that Young Life is changing lives and nurturing the future spiritual leaders of this world, and I got to be part of their work.”



“Any amount of time — even just one conversation, one smile to a kid in the camp, any amount of time you devote to the Lord — is time well spent.”

~ Julia Stevens

Support our missionaries: Mike and Kari Greenhoe

Home on furlough — for a whole year! Our own Mike and Kari have been visiting Bob and Marcy, with their two little boys Grant and Clark, and will soon be moving on to upstate New York to spend quality and quantity time with Kari's mom and her family.

While back in the USA, Greenhoses will be refreshing, reconnecting with supporters, raising more financial support and refueling for future service. Black Forest Academy (BFA) teachers raise their own support to keep tuition at a minimum for the sake of the missionaries they serve.

This CrossWay family serves more than 200 missionaries' families by teaching high school science to some 300 fifth-through-twelfth graders at BFA in Kandern, Germany, nestled into that country's southwestern corner, in biking distance of both Switzerland and France.



Please pray:



For God to continue to provide all of the needed logistical details for this year.



For God's provision to return to Germany — financial support and refueling (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual).



For healing and strength for Kari's mom.


Released . . . in China



A third-generation pastor serving at the Living Stone Church in a southwestern city in China was already familiar with persecution when he was arrested in December 2015. Having now completed his two-and-a-half-year sentence for “divulging state secrets following a lengthy pretrial period,” Yang Hua, also known as Li Guoshi, is now released to his family. The Living Stone Church, which he co-founded, has grown under persecution from 20 to more than 700 members, who are monitored, interrogated and prohibited from attending prayer groups.

During his imprisonment, Yang Hua reported that government prosecutors have threatened his life, along with those of his wife and children, and stomped on his feet in an effort to force his cooperation. One of the prosecutors told him, “I am a torture expert. I know how to beat you up without leaving a mark on your body for people to see. Doctors won't be able to diagnose you. Even you won't know what you died of.”

While in prison, Yang contracted vasculitis and had to be hospitalized, as he was unable to walk. He also contracted diabetes. In spite of what he went through, his wife said Yang broke out into loud worship songs after his release. “...His belief remains resolute,” she said.

Yang Hua has been faithful to his Lord at great cost. Let us be faithful in remembering him in prayer as he recovers his health and makes decisions about his future ministry activities. Participants in CrossWay's Christmas card writing party may recall having sent greetings to this dear brother the past two years. Hallelujah! 

Pastor Brunson released, sort of

The Turkish government has relented to international pressure and remanded Pastor Andrew Brunson to house arrest. His response: “Let it be clear, I am in prison, not for anything that I have done wrong, but because of who I am — a Christian pastor,” said Brunson while in the prison where he has been held for years. “I desperately miss my wife and children. Yet, I believe this to be true — it is an honor to suffer for Jesus Christ as many have before me. My deepest thanks to all those around the world who are standing with me and praying for me.” Please pray for his full release and for his faith to remain strong. 