



CrossWay Community Current

an Evangelical Free Church

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Christian education for all

Our Elders have published a schedule for Sunday School this fall, to begin on Sept. 22 at 11:30 a.m. Children will find their classes in the usual places, while adults and youth have two options: in the Sanctuary — Background for the Corinthian Letters, a companion to Pastor Manuel's new sermon series (already underway) or — in the lobby — Christian Doctrine through a step-by-step examination of the Evangelical Free Church of America's Statement of Faith. (see page 4)



New Beginnings music radio

Have you "tuned in" yet? It's available on our church's website (address above). A new outreach project of CrossWay, this internet outlet features classic contemporary Christian music plus short devotional messages. Here's the New Beginnings mission statement:

"We share the Gospel with a needy and lost world around us, including those who have fallen away from the church over the years. And, to encourage believers to be lights in a dark world that stand by one-another and serve Christ. To help us all prepare for Jesus's soon return."

Pastor Manuel's podcast airs Wednesdays at noon and 7 p.m. and Sundays at 9 a.m.

He would love to hear from you with your comments and questions. The "station" offers his email address for feedback: ipastor@aol.com.

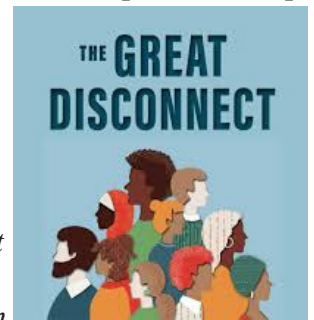


This being a transitional month, here's a helpful schedule for September Sundays, 11:30 a.m.

- ▶ Sept. 1: All-church prayer meeting
- ▶ Sept. 8: Missions presentation/Cutherells
- ▶ Sept. 15: All-church ministries fair
- ▶ Sept. 22 & 29: Christian education for all

New to the CrossWay library

The well respected pollster George Barna's group was commissioned by Mission India to research the progress of Christ's Great Commission, with the results of the study published in 2022 in *The Great Disconnect: Reclaiming the Heart of the Great Commission in Your Church*.



Serious content for the serious Christian. Barna says, "Based on data in three key areas (Motivations, Methods and Money), *The Great Disconnect* uncovers perceptions, behaviors and barriers affecting missions strategies within US churches and how the Great Commission is lived out today." Take a glance and consider adding it to your research. On the library table in the lobby, near the coffee bar.

Coming Up at CrossWay Community

Sundays • 9:30^{AM} • Prayer, lobby classroom
 Sundays • 10^{AM} • Gather for worship together
 Tuesdays • 1^{PM} - 3^{PM} • Neighborhood prayer walk
 Wednesdays • 6:30^{PM} • Underhill Club
 Sat., Aug. 31 • 1^{PM} - 2:30^{PM} • Baptism preparation
 Sun., Sept. 1 • 11:30^{AM} • Church prayer meeting
 Wed., Sept. 4 • 6^{PM} • Elder meeting
 Sat., Sept. 7 • 9^{AM} • Men's breakfast @ Bob Evans
 Sat., Sept. 7 • 9^{AM} • Women's breakfast @ Russ's
 Sun., Sept. 8 • 11:30^{AM} • Cutherell missions presentation
 Tues., Sept. 10 • 1^{PM} • Ladies Bible Study/Philippians
 Sun., Sept. 15 • 11:30^{AM} • CrossWay Ministries Fair
 Thurs., Sept. 19 • 6:30^{PM} • Small group @ Le's
 Sun., Sept. 22 • 11:30^{AM} • Sunday School begins

Meet Mike Ward of Mission India



Mike Ward's been in our midst for a couple of years now at CrossWay, and it turns out he's very involved in carrying out the Great Commission.

Mike works at Mission India and continued our Summer Missions at CrossWay series on August 11, bringing us information about the challenge of reaching unreached people, most of whom live in southeast Asia.

Mike lives out his heart for the Great Commission in his neighborhood and in his participation at CrossWay, where he is on the Missionary Support Steering Committee and involved weekly in neighborhood prayer walks.

In theatres now

Over the years, Christian moviegoers have come to love the offerings by the Kendrick brothers, looking forward to the next one while walking out of the theatre.

The next one has arrived. Its promo blurb: "The Forge tells the story of Isaiah Wright, a 19-year-old who lives for basketball and video games. A year out of high school, he still has no job, no plans, and no idea how to be a man. At odds with his single mom, Cynthia, Isaiah is given an ultimatum — to step up or move out. Feeling the pull from his friends and the push from his mom, Isaiah is hired by Moore Fitness, but has no idea how the owner will personally impact his life. With the prayers of his mother and unexpected guidance from his new mentor, Isaiah is forced to deal with his past, sacrifice his selfishness and discover how God might have a greater purpose for his life."

It opened August 23 at the area Celebration Cinemas and AMC, as well as the Sperry moviehouse in Holland. It's a great venue for "bringing a friend."



Taking prayer seriously

...Across the country, in California, the message of life's fragility is sounding loud and clear in churches like Pastor Jack Hibbs's Calvary Chapel Chino Hills. He points out that a week and a half before the former president was shot, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee (R) had called for a month of prayer and fasting — never knowing the chaos that Americans would find themselves in after just a few short days. Hibbs heard about the declaration and decided to adopt it for his community...[saying] "Let's all across America join ... Lee's challenge. Let's all become Tennesseans."

That led to a huge wave of pastors all across the U.S. contacting Hibbs to say, "We're doing the same thing with you guys."... It occurred to [Hibbs], as it did to everyone who joined in, "Who's to say but that bullet that missed President Trump



excerpt from a July 22 commentary by Suzanne Bowdey at The Washington Stand, following the attempted assassination of the former President could be the result of everybody praying during the month of July? I mean, our God does not work in circumstances that are coincidences. He works in His sovereignty."

Like so many Christians who've been concerned about the state of our nation, Hibbs can't help but wonder, "If this is not a turning point, will there be one? Be-

cause at this time, does God need to send us any further indications that we are a nation in peril without Him? ... How much further does God have to go to give us warnings that we, His people, are to repent and to seek His face?"



Saints Who Sin

Now I admit up front the title to this month's *Current* article might rankle a few. Am I encouraging sin by assuming God's people (His saints) will sin? The short answer would be "no!" Also, the last time I checked, most of us do not need someone to "encourage" us to sin. We sin of our own volition and usually do not need much encouragement to do so!

The reason I start with this subject matter is that I have been working through much preparation time in the Corinthian letters. How much do you know about the Corinthians? With God's good help and grace, I hope you will know much more about the people and church in Corinth. Let me just say, they were a mess.

Years ago, when we were considering a name change for our church, I jokingly suggested it would be more honest to call our church something like "First Church of Messy People." Not too elegant, but honest all the same.

The church in Corinth struggled with pride, sexual immorality, disunity, mistreatment of leaders, drunkenness, and materialism. Yet despite all this, God calls them "*saints*." (I Cor. 1:2-3) And Paul, knowing what he knew about them, closes the letter with "*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.*" (I Cor. 16:23-24)

Recently, I was reading from J.C. Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*. Reflecting upon Jesus' words in John 17:1-8, here is some of what he shared: "We should notice secondly in these verses what a gracious account they contain of our Lord Jesus Christ's disciples. We find our Lord Himself saying of them, '*They have kept Your Word, they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You, they have received Your words, they have known surely that I came forth from You, they have believed that You sent Me.*'"

"These are wonderful words when we consider the character of the 11 men to whom they were applied. How weak was their faith! How slender their knowledge! How shallow their spiritual achievements! How faint their hearts in the hour of danger! Only a very little time after Jesus spoke these words, they all forsook Him and fled, and one of them denied Him three times with an oath. No one can read the four gospels with attention and fail to see that never had a great master such weak servants as Jesus had in the 11 apostles. Yet these very weak servants were the men of whom the gracious head of the church speaks here in high and honourable terms. The lesson before us is full of comfort and instruction. It is evident that Jesus sees far more in His believing people than they see in themselves, or others see in them. The least degree of faith is very precious in His sight. . . . Wherever the gracious Saviour of sinners sees true faith in Himself, however feeble, He looks with compassion on many weaknesses and passes by many defects. It was this way with the 11 apostles. They were weak and unstable as water, but they believed and loved their master when millions refused to own Him." How Jesus viewed His disciples and how He views the Corinthians church (and us!) is similar.

Now I do not have the time or space in this article to lay out a comprehensive theology of sanctification. I will only share a short phrase and encourage you to explore its implications. The phrase is this: "Become what you are," a dynamic best seen, perhaps, in Romans 6:1-14. We primarily are saints — "set apart ones" by virtue of Jesus's work in us through His Gospel. (I Cor. 15:1-11) Yet, we are saints who still sin. We are not yet perfected. Some day, we will be. (Rom. 8:18-39)

The most powerful and effective way for us, then, to become what we are, is to reflect on not what we are supposed to "do" but on what has already been done for us by Jesus. Doing so (pun intended) will release the power of the Gospel in our lives, stirring us to walk by the Spirit, thus fulfilling the law. (Gal.5:1-26) So . . . if, today, you are feeling more like a "sinner," like a failure in your walk with Jesus, remember, He sees you as and calls you a saint. Let *that* sink in.

Statement of Faith — Evangelical Free Church of America

#1
God We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

#2
The Bible We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

#3
The Human Condition We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

#4
Jesus Christ We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus — Israel's promised Messiah — was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

#5
The Work of Christ We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

#6
The Holy Spirit We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

#7
The Church We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the Gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

#8
Christian Living We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.

#9
Christ's Return We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

#10
Response and Eternal Destiny We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the Gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.