



**THE  
FOUNTAIN  
CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH**

[www.thefountaincc.org](http://www.thefountaincc.org)

*Depth in Love, Truth, and Life*



*The  
Fountain  
Christian Church*

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The Fountain  
1023 N Chinowth St.  
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# Pastors' Conference Reflections

## Lessons Learned

By Pastor Sam Sears

It was a time of refreshing and learning, and it's been a whirlwind since I've been back. For those of you who are unaware, I went to a Disciple Heritage Fellowship conference in April. I am thankful for Carrie for filling in for me on Sunday, Robbie on Wednesday, and Deanna for writing a wonderful newsletter article. It was an impactful time, and I wanted to share some of the lessons learned with you.

### *What is DHF?*

Let me begin by clarifying what DHF (Disciple Heritage Fellowship) is. It isn't a denomination. They don't tell us what to do, nor are we required to give them any financial support whatsoever. What they are, what we (since I'm on the board) are, is a group of churches and leaders supporting one another with fellowship for pastors, pastoral care for pastors, training and skill sharing for church leaders and servants. To quote our board president, Kim Holley, "DHF doesn't want to tell you what to do, we want to help you do what you do."

Lori Putnam was the brains behind the conference, and she is a staff member at Decatur First, which hosted the event. Decatur First could be described as the "flagship" of DHF. It is, by many metrics, the healthiest of the DHF associated churches. They are a larger church, have a healthy outreach (evangelism) heart, have a great grasp on technology and trends, and are active in the community by providing chaplaincy to nearby hospitals. When DHF was facing financial issues, they took DHF on as a mission and kept it afloat, and it's now growing. They serve as the base of operations for the one DHF staff, Rick Grace; several staff from Decatur First also assist DHF as part of their duties.

I'm thankful for the chance to serve with and learn from the folks at DHF, and here are just a few reflections, and applications.

### *We need to look for our new Samaria.*

Wayne Kent, Pastor at First Christian Decatur, closed out the conference with a wonderful look at the woman at the well in Samaria, as recorded in John 4. Jesus was off the normal road for religious Jews of the day, who would have avoided the incorrect theology and lineage of the Samaritans. It wasn't culturally appropriate for Him to talk to a woman by herself and given the time of day when she was there, Jesus would have known she was avoiding others, even without His divine knowledge.

Wayne reminded us of our call to be missionaries. I do mean "OUR." if you are a Christian and reading this newsletter, you are part of God's body and

His royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9.) Even though Jesus was doing things differently than the disciples expected, He was doing so with a purpose. Wayne asked an important question, "What's more important: religious words, or Samaritans coming to Jesus?"

The church is a rare type of organization, in that it exists to focus on those who aren't yet a part of it. Jesus didn't shy away from engaging with Jewish leaders, but it was this woman to whom was first revealed His identity of Messiah — this outsider, a person whom most wouldn't reach. There are a lot of unreached around us in places where we may not be looking, and Wayne challenged us to be creative and to be on the lookout for those in need.

Wayne connected with the opening session, jointly presented by Rick Grace and Kim Holley, that discussed DHF's past. DHF's past is very much like the past of our own church. Well before my arrival, there was a fight for biblical values. It developed a strong sense of community, as individuals rallied to defend God's truth and fight for His bride, the church, to be untarnished by ideas purely of this world. Many DHF churches still have this strong community, but not all are engaged in evangelism the way we all should be. The question was asked, "What are we going to do with the theology we fought so hard to protect?"

### *We need a really simple vision.*

In a session entitled "Navigating Seasons of Transition," Dr. Ken Moberg challenged pastors and leaders on the basics. The church has a purpose, and we need to unite and head in that direction. But how do we do it? Given the difference physical and spiritual ages that exist in a church, a question was asked, was how do we simplify our mission into something so simple a child could remember and repeat it?

The staff are currently going through U-Turn Church by Kevin Harney and Bob Bower. In it, a church member expresses frustration at one of the authors as they pastored a church through change. They had been willing to try a few things, but they were getting tired of trying. To paraphrase the book, the member said, "Will this be the last thing we change?"

The Pastor dropped a bombshell. "As long as we are trying to reach people for Jesus there will be change."

The truth of Scripture doesn't change. God's love doesn't change. Culture and technology do. The way we communicate does.

After listening to Dr. Moberg, it became clear that we needed to change the way we communicate our vision. It needs to be simplified, so it can better be caught by everyone. I'll articulate this in a future topical message, but it needs to be so simple that a child can catch it. After much prayer, and talking with Dr. Moberg himself, I presented a new statement to the Elders that conveys our purpose as group of Gospel-orientated believers with a mission in a way that's unique to us, while still being biblical. I wrote it out this way first:

*(Continued on page 4)*



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*Depth in Love, Depth in Truth, Depth in Life.*

It could also be written, "Depth in Love, Truth and Life." It reflects an already-existing desire for depth — not just another surface-level sermon or kind platitude, but something more changing and more powerful, more genuine. "Depth in Love" reflects God's love to everyone, including those modern-day Samaritans out there; "Depth in Truth" reflects our desire to dig into what God's word says; and "Depth in Life" reflects the idea of living out what we learn together in community.

The Elder Council bought into the rephrase of our mission statement, and you will see the phrases around church as decorations soon. It's adapt — or die.

David Upchurch had an impactful breakout session regarding church strategy after the pandemic and after the quarantine. That shadow really touched upon all aspects of the conference. Their research only confirmed my own, and their experience in broader and bigger contexts continued to provide useful information in approaches to surviving in a very new landscape.

The reality is that the world isn't going back to "normal." The world we were trained to do ministry in is gone. Uber has replaced the taxi, and we need to take our next steps carefully, as society at large continues to see "church" as less and less important.

Before the pandemic, society had already drifted far from church culture, with the divide between Christians and non-Christians being so wide that even the words we used were different. Technology was an area that the world thought churches were already seen as behind with, rightly so, and the pandemic accelerated the move and furthered the divide.

Years ago, the church foyer or lobby served as the first experience that people would have with a church. Going through the front door was literally going through the front door. It isn't that way anymore. In the same way that individuals have stopped using doorbells and now text people when they arrive at their house, new folks check out the website first. That wasn't so new; it's been that way for several years. The change is that now many will experience one or more services online before being willing to try an in-person service, and most of them are looking for similar things.

Thanks to faithful equippers and volunteers, we got our services online, but more challenges exist and are ahead. In the coming months, you will continue to see us adjust technology with new software and hardware. The end goal is to glorify God and remove barriers for individuals who try our church, either online or in person, but don't stay.

Although there are a few outliers, church researchers like Barna Group, Thom Rainer and Carey Nieuwhof are all clear about what is working, and what isn't. Simply spending time with fellow pastors and listening to their struggles

and various strategies, clear trends could be seen at the DHF conference.

Considering these trends, I'm confident that God spared us from being among the staggering 20% of churches who closed last year so that we can continue our mission right here in Visalia. David Upchurch encouraged us to cut, but with a scalpel, not a chainsaw, what wasn't working, and to take this as an opportunity. Some things we did before the pandemic simply won't come back, so we can do other things better.

The information gained at DHF helped guide our next steps, as did the recent church surveys. Expect us to continue two services. One will be geared more towards what younger and non-church individuals consistently say that they want, both here, and across the country, the other will be more classic. It's not only technology behind the scenes that will need to change, but we will continue to ask what a new visitor might see, that those of us who are regulars would not, and make some adjustments based on that information.

We will be launching a formal campaign to help us make some more modern adjustments and be physically more welcoming. It's not about making the place look "nicer" in and of itself; it's about communicating to those outside of our church that we would love to share life and our Lord with them.

*We aren't alone.*

I take comfort in the fact that we aren't in this alone. Other churches are facing the same challenges. Navigating listening and valuing heritage while welcoming surprisingly different people and trying to bridge the two together isn't easy, but it's worthwhile. It's a problem that the Apostles had to enlist the first deacons to help with and was a symptom of the growth of the first church. Other churches are dealing with smaller in persons services, more folks watching from the couch, and of course impacts of a less stable economy.

I have been to pastors' conferences before, but I have to say this was the one that felt most like family. I wasn't the only one from outside the "Christian Restoration movement" tradition. Lots of us have been grafted into a group of churches who really want to fellowship together, focus on the essentials, and serve God together. It's refreshing. I've been in places that claim that, but often devolve into believers wasting their time fighting one another in some way or another. Everyone seemed very aware that we are in this together, and desired to support one another.

*We have an encouraging example.*

28 years ago, when Wayne Kent was hired at FCC Decatur, everyone on stage wore choir robes, he was the only staff, and there were around 200 people. Their town has continued to shrink over the years and is currently about 50,000 fewer people than our own, but by embracing new technology, multiple services, and making sure to communicate to their community in a way that effectively connects with those they are trying to reach, they have grown to nearly 2,000 on a Sunday, in multiple services, of course. I don't

*(Continued on page 6)*



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know what God has in store for us. I can't ever envision myself in a church that large, but that's not the goal, and it wasn't theirs, either. It was just reaching one person at a time for our Lord — each changed life glorifying our Savior.

*God is working in our congregation, right now!*

While it's easy to focus on individuals moving out of state, going to be with the Lord, being unable to be with us in person due to health reasons of their own, or their family members, some great things have been happening in our church. Spending time with other pastors helped me to recognize what God is doing among us.

The idea of organically outreaching to others is being absorbed and lived out. I see folks like Joe, June, Deanna and more inviting their friends and sitting beside them on Sunday morning. I've seen Romy work hard at inviting and connecting the youth, and I'm excited to see new singers up on stage in the contemporary service. Our Wednesday family nights have drawn new families, and It's been a joy to hear young children memorize Bible verses for the first time during AWANA.

I'm looking forward to what God will do in the rest of 2021, but in the meantime, we have our standing orders:

Matthew 28:19-20: Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

June 2021

|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| David Ajluni.....      | 5  |
| Parker Bailey.....     | 8  |
| Peggy Jones.....       | 9  |
| Henry Thomas.....      | 12 |
| Anna Tollison.....     | 12 |
| Chris Stone.....       | 14 |
| David Thomas.....      | 16 |
| Roger Johnson.....     | 19 |
| Alina Garcia.....      | 22 |
| JoAnne Henderson ..... | 23 |
| Ruth Kurihara.....     | 25 |
| June Glick.....        | 26 |
| Carolyn Subejano.....  | 27 |
| Barbara Kay Grant..... | 29 |

*Happy Anniversary!*

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Caleb & Karen Gunning .....     | 3  |
| Charles & Marilee Douglass..... | 11 |
| David & Melissa Thomas .....    | 14 |
| Bill & Debbie Bianchi .....     | 18 |
| Chris & Carol Stone.....        | 19 |

**FOUNTAIN SUMMER AT 7:00!**

[WWW.THEFOUNTAINCC.ORG](http://WWW.THEFOUNTAINCC.ORG)

**WEDNESDAY FAMILY NIGHTS**  
*ALL EVENTS (EXCEPT KIDS CAMP) START AT 7PM*

**JUNE**

23RD - MOVIE   
30TH - PRAYER NIGHT

**JULY**

7 - YARD GAMES  
14 - KIDS CAMP DECORATING & PIZZA  
28 - BOARD GAMES & BBQ 

**AUGUST**

4TH - WORSHIP NIGHT  
11TH - MOVIE & TACO TRUCK

**KIDS CAMP** - JULY 19-23 - REGISTER FREE ONLINE

AWANA STARTS UP SEPTEMBER 8TH, REGISTER NOW OR AT THE OPEN HOUSE ON THE 1ST!

# June 2021

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue               | Wed  | Thu                         | Fri                 | Sat |
|--|---|-------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----|
|  |   | 1<br>10:00 Staff  | 2<br>6:00 Family Night<br>Awana<br>Youth<br>Men's Study<br>Women's Study | 3<br>10:00 Berean Watchmen  | 4 6:30 Men's Group  | 5   |
| 6<br>8:30 Worship<br>10:15 Worship<br>2:00 Men's Bible Study                         | 7<br>10:40 Prayer Warriors<br>12:00 Women's Bible Study | 8<br>10:00 Staff  | 9  | 10<br>10:00 Berean Watchmen | 11 6:30 Men's Group | 12  |
| 13<br>8:30 Worship<br>10:15 Worship<br>12:00 Elder Council<br>2:00 Men's Bible Study | 14<br>10:40 Prayer Warriors                             | 15<br>10:00 Staff | 16   | 17<br>10:00 Berean Watchmen | 18 6:30 Men's Group | 19  |
| 20 FATHER'S DAY<br>8:30 Worship<br>10:15 Worship<br>2:00 Men's Bible Study           | 21<br>10:40 Prayer Warriors                             | 22<br>10:00 Staff | 23<br>7:00 Movie Night   | 24<br>10:00 Berean Watchmen | 25 6:30 Men's Group | 26  |
| 27<br>8:30 Worship<br>10:15 Worship<br>2:00 Men's Bible Study                        | 28<br>10:40 Prayer Warriors                             | 29<br>10:00 Staff | 30<br>7:00 Prayer Night  |                             |                     |     |



# One Drop of Jesus' Blood

By Rona Swanson

I was driving home from my office after darkness had set in. A young man came across the street in front of me on his skateboard. It was getting dark and I did not see him, because he was dressed in a dark sweatshirt and sweat-pants, until he was in the path of my headlights. I had to slam on the brake pretty hard to keep from bumping him. The thing that really fried me, after I got over the fright, was the look in his eyes as he passed by. His eyes locked right onto mine and the insolent disrespect and challenge in them chilled me.

In fact, I thought about that as I continued on my way. I ranted aloud to a listening God, "The nerve of that punk to stare me down like that! Who did he think he was, anyway? Scaring me like that? And the dumb thing about it is, if I had not been careful and cautious, I could have seriously hurt him, even squashed him."

Then the weekend hit, and all of the busyness, but in Sunday morning worship we sang a song...Jesus' blood never failed me...Jesus' blood never failed me....and as we sang, I had an internal conversation with the Lord. I thought... "no, Lord, you have never failed me...but how many times have I failed you, how many times have I not lived up to the price tag paid for me?"

And then, in my mind's eye, I saw one drop of that precious fluid. One drop of the blood of Jesus....and I realized that the wealth of the whole universe could not measure the worth of one single drop of the blood of the King of Kings. And yet there were many, poured out...falling all around...the thirsty ground drinking it up.

And then I remembered my little diatribe about being disrespected and my knees nearly buckled.

Here I had been so offended, so wound up because a kid had inconvenienced me and had the nerve to stare me down.

And yet, I was reminded of the most immense disrespect of all history...the living, breathing Son of our Loving God...put to death for our penalty and I felt the Lord whispering back my rant to me.... "The nerve...who do they all think they are...if I had not been careful, I could have seriously hurt them, even squashed them!"

Of course, the Lord was not on a rant, just letting me compare my own pettiness to the jaw-dropping redemption cost of you and me.

And I saw the cross in a whole new way.

One drop of precious blood, worth more than all of creation, yet laid down willingly, drop upon drop upon drop, while we were yet sinners and enemies.

May our hearts be full of awe-struck RESPECT for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus!

Philippians 2:5-11 (NASB)

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God

# One Drop of Jesus' Blood

By Rona Swanson

something to be grasped, but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross. For this reason also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



## We Are The Church

### Pick up your T-shirt or Polo

T-shirts are \$20 each

Polos are \$30 each

Proceeds are going to the building improvements that are continuing.





# We Gon' Be Alright

By Romy Sagastume

Beautiful cool evenings. The breeze brings in a sense of peace. Long walks, bike rides, lollipops and movie nights. Joys of family time, the occasional "camping" in the backyard. The beauty of it came with a side of uncertainty. Uncertainty that filled our minds with fear, sadness and so many other feelings that perhaps we didn't remember we had. It was unknown territory, one we had only seen in chaotic movies. We were living 2020 and had become the star of our own movie. Human interaction was missed more than ever before. Lonely streets surrounded us, *Mooney Blvd* was a ghost town and Uber eats was making more money than before. The word "death" was something I kept hearing over and over again. I vividly remember my first trip to Walmart where I joined humanity in the hunt for toilet paper. I walked in with my first homemade mask thinking I looked like a burglar but feeling a bit like Laura Croft.

Spring passed, summer joined us with highs of 110 degrees and the feeling of Laura Croft melted away. It had become difficult to breath. The "cool" factor was gone in every sense of the word. Everyone I talked to seemed too long for "normality" and for things to return to what they once were. It was almost as if we were willing to pretend that the 2020 pandemic had never happened. The reality was that we were all, like it or not, marking history. The thought that in years to come kids at school would learn about a time where schools were canceled for nearly a year. I can almost hear them say "awww lucky them", but not for most moms that were forced to become teachers of every grade along with housekeepers, cooks, and the occasional clown to cheer up a bummed-out kid.

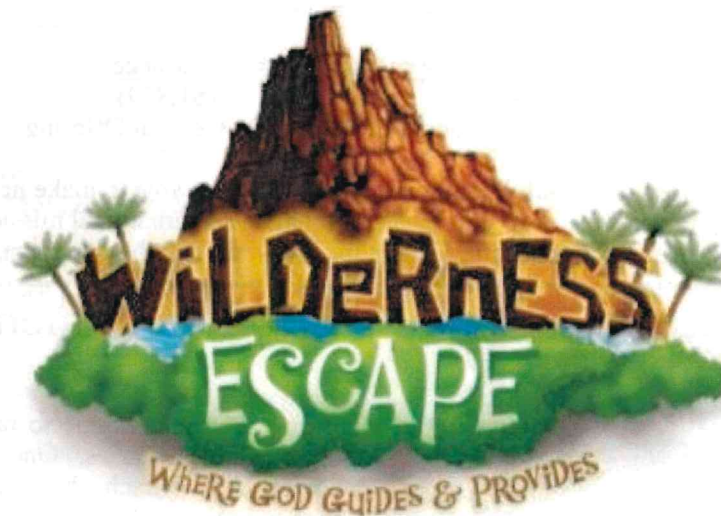
In my attempt to entertain my family, we joined the "Instagram lip singing crew". Analee (my eight-year-old daughter) and I decided we would sing/ rap a song titled "*We Gon' Be Alright*". First of all, it consumed at least two hours of our time, and at that moment some days seem to have forty-eight hours instead of twenty-four. Second it was super fun for both of us to pretend. I would like to share some lyrics from that song the verse went something like this."

*It gets so hard Just trying to figure it out, fighting doubt Tryna believe  
God Tryna watch the words of my mouth and stay on the route Troubles come  
and go Even on the mountain high or the valley low Never let your faith go  
Never let your faith go " and now the chorus "We gon' be alright, we gon' be  
alright We gon' be alright, alright We gon' be alright, we gon' be alright We  
gon' be alright, alright"*

The Lord works in many ways. Unknowingly God was using this song to comfort my heart and it had become our declaration. What had started as a game/let's kill some time was our confession that things were going to be alright. I was speaking to my soul as David once did. Now here we are nearly halfway through 2021. We have now adapted to the "new normal" and it seems



like we are thankful for what we get. Are we better? Are we stronger? Are we wiser? I can confidently say yes! God has been so good to us. It seems like just yesterday I was starring in my chaotic movie and now in just a few days *Family Nights* will be wrapping up as we anxiously start planning for *Kids Camp 2021*. Things have now changed but let us not forget where we were and how far the Lord had brought us. Let our hearts be full of thanksgiving and let us say as David said, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." (Psalms 19:14)



The Fountain Kids Camp  
July 19-23 2021  
From 6:00pm-8:00pm  
Online registration is available.



## Attendance & Giving

May 2021

| Date        | In Person Attendance | Giving      |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------|
| May 2.....  | 95 .....             | \$4,269.05  |
| May 9.....  | 108 .....            | \$7,885.00  |
| May 16..... | 88 .....             | \$4,592.06  |
| May 23..... | 88 .....             | \$1,896.00  |
|             | May 30 .....         | \$4,130.00  |
|             | Online Giving.....   | \$5,099.00  |
|             | Total .....          | \$27,871.11 |



### Financial Snap Shot

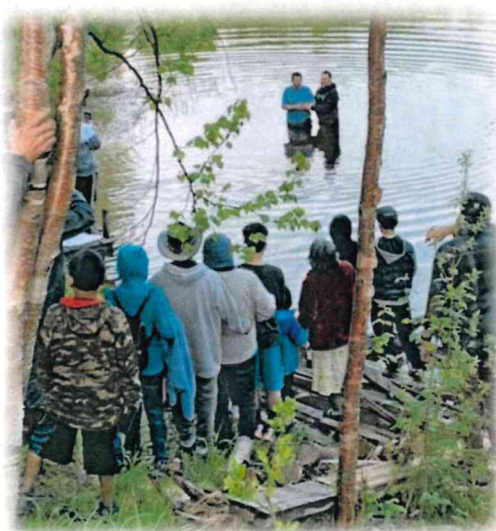
Year to Date – General Tithes & Budget as of 4/30/21

| General Offerings | 2021 Budget (4 mos) | Variance  |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| \$87,457          | \$89,336            | (\$1,879) |

Note: Budget based on annualized budget of \$268,008 - General Offering

We are thankful for your faithful equipping. We have been able to make necessary upgrades and continue to give to local, national and international missions. We are slightly short per budget and have more necessary expenses to come.

## Mission Moment



Please continue to pray for our missionaries. One of whom, Jeff Kirsch, has been flying individuals to a Bible camp in Alaska, where a dozen folks ranging from 12-60 were baptized!

For a complete list of the missions we support go to our website: [thefountaincc.org](http://thefountaincc.org) and look in the "About Us" dropdown.



## Prayer Concerns

June 2021

### Health

Ana Morales, Ashley Banuelos, Barbara Grant, Cindy Marks, Donna Black, Donna Eastin, Frank Henley, Glenda & Harold Hoppert, Jean Lamb, Jina Sevier, JoAnne Jordan, Kevin Guy, Marilee Douglass, Pam Shattuck, Pauline Gurule, Rick Hamilton, Fred Wilder, Sandy Zinger

### Cancer

Al Stone, Charles Douglass, Hazel Bahrenburg, Jiggy Greene, Jim Shackelford, Joe Grant, Joe Ryan, Keith Moore, Michael Elder, Mike Brazil, Olly Ajluni, Sandra Campbell, Shannan Ajluni, Susan Jacquez, Jamie Harp

### Other Needs

Jessica Morrow (Recovery from Surgery), Nina Suttles (Vision)

### Military

Andie Richwine - Marine  
Brett Boland - Virginia  
Jason Mariel - Afghanistan  
Matthew Calhoun - Fort Knox  
Michael Reid - San Diego, CA  
Preston Correa - Marines