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# Spring Newsletter 2009

## FOCUS ON FELLOWSHIP

We read, in the book of Acts, about the workings of the early Church, we read about a people who didn't have training– didn't have media presentations– and didn't have tailored workbooks... in fact they didn't even have The Bible! We wonder... what did they have?

They had the very real power of The Holy Spirit! They had caring "interdependent" relationships with each other. Those relationships were filled with visible evidence of changed lives– touched by God! The Bible tells us that they were "devoted" to the disciplines necessary for growth. As we continue pursuing direction and growth in ministry, we are challenged with what to provide in terms of help, both to individuals and to the church.

***And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42***

We have dedicated this year to the development of workers within various churches and fellowship groupings to pay close attention to what God is doing, and get on board with Him. Henry Blackaby has always maintained that we are to "find where

God is working, and join Him" rather than to expect God to bless whatever we decide we should do. Much of our place in God's work, here on earth, is recognized while we are in the midst of those early church disciplines (see box). If we are continually devoting ourselves to learning, genuine fellowship, remembrance of His death and resurrection and to prayer... we will see growth, deliverance and true joy in our lives and the lives of others!

## SOULCARE

"Many are involved in small groups, and no one knows what is happening beneath the surface of their lives. Their interior worlds are a private matter in the middle of Christian fellowship. I believe that in every country on this planet there are thousands of good folks who would love to know how to enter people's lives at a meaningful level, who would love to know how to move into the interior world of someone's life, who would know how to move into their soul and do some real good and make a difference. Some people call this kind of help "counseling." Others call this help "pastoring." I call this "SoulCare"

I feel such a temptation to not get involved in somebody else's soul, but to keep things pleasant, to keep things shallow. SoulCare resists that temptation. SoulCare believes that there's no more vital work than deep personal renewal– through healthy, meaningful, relationships."

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## ARE YOU TELLING HIS STORY? - MICHAEL KISNER

(Acts 8:30-31a, 35) So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him."

Suppose someone came up to you and told you their life was a mess, changes needed to be made, and they realized that they needed a deeper relationship with Christ in order for those changes to take place. What are you going to do now? What's your next step? Unfortunately, the answer for most Christians today is to invite them to Church with the goal of introducing them to their Pastor. Don't get me wrong, inviting them to Church and introducing them to the Pastor are good and necessary things to do, but is that what they are asking for? What do they need right now? In Acts 8, Philip was guided by the spirit to come along side the Ethiopian, but Philip's response to the Ethiopian's request for guidance was not "meet me at Church and I will introduce you to one of the Apostles." In verse 35 we read, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him."

The "conventional wisdom" in the Christian community today seems to be geared toward putting everything off on the Church in general or to the Pastors in particular. Is this the model presented to us in the Scriptures? Sure, the Church and Pastors play a vital role in individual and corporate growth within a congregation, but what is the individual Christian's responsibility in fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples?

With Philip and the Ethiopian we have a clear example of our responsibilities as a Christian. We must realize that when we are confronted with someone asking for guidance in spiritual matters, they are not there by accident. It is God himself, acting through the Holy Spirit, that has arranged the meeting.

And if God is the all knowing and all powerful God we profess Him to be, then we also have to understand that the person God has brought us together with is not beyond the help we are able to give. We all have a unique and individ-

ual relationship with Jesus Christ, based on the events and circumstances that not only led us to recognize Him as our Savior, but which also sustains us in that relationship as we are yet sinners. This is our testimony, our witness, of the Jesus others are seeking.

So why are most of us reluctant to engage in this personal discipleship? It seems we have somehow convinced ourselves that it takes an advanced education in Theology in order to encourage and guide someone in the ins and outs of a Christian life. But in reality, all it takes is an intimate knowledge of God's word and our personal experience in applying that knowledge in our everyday lives. This is not to downplay the role of Pastor's and Teachers in the Church.

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Their role is to equip the saints for "the work of ministry" (Ephesians 4:11-12), building on a foundation laid by our personal time in God's word and prayer. It is when both of these elements are working together that we are equipped and able to disciple. Unfortunately, we have become a society of Christians content to sit in Church and listen, forsaking our personal time in the Word and our individual growth in grace. This may simplify our Christian life to some degree, but it leaves those who are seeking and placed in our lives by God on the outside looking in, wondering where the Love of Christ really is.

My challenge to each of you is to take a good look at your spiritual foundation. Could you sit down with someone and explain the Ten Commandments and how they apply to everyday life? If not, what is your Christian life based on? If you can, then don't hold back what the Lord has given you.



## Testimony- William DuBose

At the age of 13, I started drinking and smoking pot. I did that for some years, until about the age of 15. Then new drugs came into my life – heroin and cocaine... so I started using these drugs, not knowing how deep I was getting into it. Then one morning I was sick and really did not know why. A friend told me what was wrong – I was hooked. I continued to use and then to sell to support my habit for many years, even as I went into the Army. When I came home, I continued to use and sell.

During all this, I did things I am not proud of and hurt my loved ones and lied to them. This went on for some more years until in my early 30's, when I felt it was time to stop but I didn't know how. One night I asked God to help, I had asked many times before but I was not ready. Finally I was fed up with the life I was leading so I guess God saw something in my heart, this time, because one day I was locked up and that was when I started my walk with God. He walked with me slowly... I guess to see if my heart was true.



One day my grandmother looked at me after being home 15 months and she said to me that she was proud of me. A month later, she passed away. At the time, I knew in my heart that God and my grandmother were waiting for me. So here I am, 21 years later and God is still walking with me. He has walked me into Hazelwood Baptist Church as a member and as a Deacon. He has walked me into being a Stauros Pastoral Care Worker and he will always continue to walk with me until I meet him. So you see my brothers and sisters, this testimony is not about me, it's about my Father in Heaven, how He can walk you through the darkness. Ask the Savior to help you, comfort, strengthen and keep you. He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.

## News From Florida

Our family has been here for five years now. Within that time, the Lord has been faithful in bringing women across my path that need to experience God's unconditional love and saving grace. Over the past five years, I have seen women come and go, as is often common in ministry. I have met one-to-one with numerous women, some coming from a past of alcohol or other drug abuse, some being wives, sisters, mothers and friends of the same. I have ministered to women who have come out of prison due to circumstances surrounding their lifestyles of such abuse. I have ministered to women who suffer abuse at the hands of their husbands or others who are supposed to love them and protect them. I have met with women who come from a background of childhood sexual abuse and even witchcraft. I have led a Stauros meeting and several Bible studies. I have taken two women through a discipleship training course called CORE. I ministered to a couple who found themselves homeless, and watched as God did a miracle in their lives by providing jobs, a vehicle, and even a home for them to live in. When I look back over the last five years, I see where the Lord has been at work in the lives of these women as well as my own life. When I first started the work of Stauros, I had two major concerns; where will the women come from, and how will I know what to say and do? The answers to both of my concerns were the same:

***Proverbs 3:5-6 "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."***

What I now realize is that it is not up to me... it actually has nothing to do with me. Seeing God's wonderful hand in the things I mentioned above had nothing to do with me. God gave me the privilege to watch Him at work in the lives of these women. He allowed me to be a part of His miraculous work. He used me to fulfill His plans and His purpose, and He taught me how to depend on Him and The Holy Spirit for direction. The Lord knows who He will send to me, and what He wants to say to them and ultimately do for them. My part is to stay so connected to Him that I do not miss the opportunities He puts before me; to trust Him and His ways, and not get in His way with my own thoughts and agenda.

Please keep me and the work of Stauros in your daily prayers. Please pray specifically for His work in Florida to continue to grow. Pray for Him to continue sending women for me to meet with, and opportunities for me share His love, maybe for the first time, or to help them rediscover and deepen their relationship with Him. Pray specifically for Him to raise up a man to minister to the many men who need the help and support of a one on one ministry. And finally, pray for financial support to expand the ministry work locally in my area. We cannot express in words how much your support means.

**Kim Arrogancia**

## “ONE OF A HUNDRED”

Our One Of A Hundred campaign is an effort to provide for the growing needs within the Ministry of Stauros. We are looking for 100 individuals who will pledge \$30.00 per month during the calendar year of 2009. If you will be “One Of A Hundred”, we would appreciate it greatly. For more info., please contact your local Stauros representative.

### Cooper Family CD

The Cooper Family has recorded a CD of songs which God has given them over the years. “Call On HIS Name” is the title. They have kindly offered that any donations be given toward the ministry of Stauros.

If you would like more information about The Cooper Family or would like to obtain a CD, please contact one of the individuals at the bottom of this page or visit:

[www.cooperfamilyfive.com](http://www.cooperfamilyfive.com)

## MINISTRY CD

Please continue lifting in prayer the recording of a Ministry CD. The title will be: “HE Has Set Me Free”. It will contain testimonies of encouragement spoken by various Stauros friends and workers, as well as songs of worship. Please pray for all who are involved with recording, and for the financial help to make this possible. Our desire is to help others know that “HE can set them free”!

## LOOKING AHEAD

### STAUROS RALLY 2009 & CRAFT FAIR

Please mark your calendars for Sunday – June 7 for our annual Stauros Rally at White Marsh Baptist Church. There will be a “craft fair” at 3:00 in the front parking lot of WMBC– and the Rally will follow at 6:00 in the main sanctuary. Our speaker will be Tom Eakins– from Northern Ireland. We will hear testimony from Chris & Marie Spiess, and will be offering hope through worship of our Heavenly Father. Please mark your calendar to come and bring someone who needs to see that, with God’s help, they can face tomorrow!

*For further information about what you’ve read in this newsletter, please contact:*

**In MD:** John and Peggy Burghauser - Perry Hall, MD  
Tel: 443.791.1599 E-mail: [john@stauros.com](mailto:john@stauros.com)

**Don and Melisa Riffle - Rosedale, MD**  
Tel: 240.429.6836

**William DuBose—Rosedale, MD**  
Tel: 443.799.0889

**In WV:** Micah and Martha Suits - Inwood WV  
Tel: 304.261.8109 E-mail: [mike@stauros.com](mailto:mike@stauros.com)

**In FL:** Kim Arrogancia- Port St. Lucie  
Cell: 772.873.9510 E-mail: [kim@stauros.com](mailto:kim@stauros.com)

**In GA:** Jeff and Amy Morgan– Snellville  
c/o Chapel Woods Presbyterian Church 770.978.1445

“How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” Romans 10:14+15