

X'ENT NEWS

**PROVIDING EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP
THROUGH QUALITY CHRISTIAN TRAINING**

Volume 11 Issue 3

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

October 2003

The book of Jeremiah is a remarkable book. It reminds us of the history of Judah during a very rebellious time in her history. Ironically, the people of Judah did not see themselves as rebellious at all. Consider some of the things these people claimed for themselves:

I am not defiled.
I have not gone after the Baals.
I am innocent.
Surely His anger is turned away from me.
I have not sinned.

On the other hand, consider God's perspective concerning these people:

My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.
The dread of Me is not in you.
The stain of your iniquity is before Me.
They have turned their back to Me and not their face.
My people have forgotten Me days without number.
You are a harlot with many lovers.

It is in this setting that God calls Jeremiah into ministry. He is about twenty years old. The people believe they are doing just great and God says they are a sinful, rebellious people. Jeremiah is given the call to carry a message of impending judgment. Jeremiah's initial response

Finding Comfort in God's Call

to this call was "I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth."

Jeremiah chapter 1 reminds us that God's call is not us accomplishing ministry on His behalf, rather God accomplishing His work both in and through our lives. Consider the following verses:

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.

Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

God is the One who creates as well as the One who consecrates. He appoints individuals to specific tasks.

He is the One who sends out and He is the One who gives the words that must be spoken. He puts us in the place He desires us to be and provides the opportunities to accomplish the work that He has ordained.

Jeremiah 1:18-19

"Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD.

He does not remove us from the battle. Instead, He protects us and sustains us. He is our victory. Ministry is all about God accomplishing God's work by God's power because God is God.

Jeremiah's ministry was extremely difficult with untold hardships. It was also God's call for his life. God used him to accomplish a specific work during a specific time to a particular group of people.

And so it is for those who are called to ministry. It is God's work accomplished by His power with His provision. It is a blessed work to serve the living God in whatever service that He determines is best. We must remember that this is all about Him. He knows exactly what He is doing and will fully accomplish all that He has set out to do. What a glorious God we serve!

✍️ Rocky Wyatt

This Issue...
Finding Comfort in God's Call
Youth Bummer: Taken for a Ride
Interview with a Board Member
News from the World of XL



“Whoa, dude, what a ride!”

Was the speaker of this famous sentence a golden-haired, California boy with deeply bronzed muscles and perfect teeth? Nope. Perhaps a hip, sparkingly waxed, 150-year-old surfer turtle from the 2003 summer hit, *Finding Nemo*? Hardly. These words exploded from the lips of a wild-haired adolescent with white knuckles and bugs in his teeth. So, what in the world am I talking about? I thought you’d never ask...

All in all it was your basic youth trip: clunky youth bus, rowdy youth kids, heroic youth staff, and 60 gazillion “youth” miles to drive in one week.

Note: A “youth” mile is calculated by taking the projected number of miles, adding 200 miles (for the part of the map the youth intern forgot to include in the calculations), adding another 100 miles (for interns taking wrong turns onto interstates with no exits), then dividing by the speed limit minus 30 mph (to get the actual speed of the 20-year-old, diesel-guzzling, smoke-churning Ford Bluebird), minus another 10 mph to factor in an average of five potty stops per hour. Potty stops are calculated by taking the number of ounces of Mountain Dew consumed in one hour by the average teenager – about 100 - and dividing by the median amount of time needed for Mountain Dew to traverse the human digestive system – 20 minutes in the strongest teen, about 2.5 minutes in freshman girls.

We met at the church, waited for all the latecomers to arrive, and then

loaded our entire luggage on the nifty new racks that our youth engineer had installed on top of the bus (every youth group has one of these men who can create whole cities with duct tape and kite string). As we were loading, I thought about leaving a few choice kids on top, but repented of my sin and finished up. We departed precisely 1.5 hours after the time stated in the brochure – in other words, right on schedule. After traveling about 200 “youth” miles (see note above), it was time for a real break. So, I began looking for a restaurant capable of handling 50 ravenous adolescents with speed, cheerfulness, and economy. Since no such place exists on this planet, I settled for the next McDonald’s I saw.

While the kids were eating, I snuck away to make a few well needed phone calls - you know, finding someone to speak in Sunday School, informing the church secretary where we were going, and reserving our campsite for the night...there just never seems to be enough time to take care of these little details before leaving. Our lunch break took a little longer than expected (after a group of freshman boys were late coming back from a quick Wal-Mart expedition to collect a whoopee cushion and some “green ooze” to liven up the bus trip), but we were on the road again after only about three hours – not too bad!

Several hundred miles (and multiple potty stops later) we arrived at our second Micky D’s for a “quick” dinner. As I stood at the door to give the kids their money (neatly placed “Jan Anderson” style in envelopes for individual distribution at restaurants), I realized in horror that I had left the notebook with the envelopes in the phone booth at the previous McDonald’s. In fact, I had left all the money for the rest of the meals at camp on top of the phone. Thinking clearly and lucidly as

always, I made a mad dash for the bus, threw the key in the ignition and stomped on the gas. The same thing happened that always happens, the bus made a few grunts and groans and then rolled with the speed of a dying tortoise towards the interstate...and all my money. The youth bus can really move when it wants to, so after about 15 minutes, we were up to 40 miles per hour.

About then my brain caught up with the bus and I began to think through the wisdom of going back for the money. There was no way I could make it back by the time the kids finished eating and they really couldn’t eat anyway unless they were lucky enough to scrounge up the money for a Happy Meal or two. Also, this was going to make us really late for the evening meeting, which meant there would be more nodding, drooling heads than usual. Since I was already well on my way, I decided to keep going. Besides, “frenzied, desperate youth pastor” miles go by much faster than “youth” miles.

Had I not been so intent on keeping the bus at its maximum speed of 42.37 mph, I might have noticed the funny looks and even a few honks from the cars that were zipping past. As it was, I was only thinking of those lonely envelopes, just waiting to make some lucky traveler’s day. In what seemed like hours (and it probably was), I arrived at the first McDonald’s and dashed out of the bus to the phone booth. My sigh of relief at seeing the envelopes sitting safely by the phone was, just at that moment, interrupted by the sentence with which I opened my story. Whirling around, I saw the above-mentioned teen dismounting from the top of the bus where he had been clinging for dear life all during my frantic race to a save a couple of hundred bucks. Unbeknownst to me, he had been attempting to retrieve his wallet from the luggage rack when I had driven off. Far from being upset,

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Interview with
Board Member
**Brian
Murphy**



Full name: Brian Michael Murphy

Nicknames: "Murph"

Birthplace: Chula Vista, CA (suburb of San Diego)...also affectionately known as "Chula Juana"

Place(s) lived while growing up:
San Diego

Siblings: One great younger sister who is a chemist (She got all the brains in the family.)

Favorite activities while growing up: Fishing, playing baseball, soccer, all sports

First (or worst) job: I worked for some guy drilling holes in computer circuitry boards. I was really bad at it and cost the company a fortune because I kept breaking the diamond tipped drill bits. Ask Chris Riser about this one too.

Best childhood memory: Fishing, going to ball games and hockey games with my dad (anything with my dad was a great memory)

College: Christian Heritage College in San Diego

Major: Biblical Studies/Pastoral Major

Wife's name: Diane

Years married: 12

Kids' names & ages: Patrick (11); Brendan (8); Aiden (3); Emma (2)

Favorite food(s): Cheeseburgers, seafood (not octopus or anything really weird like that – no sushi!), Thanksgiving dinner

Favorite color: Sort of a deep water blue

Favorite vacation spot: Mammoth Lakes in the Sierra Mountains (the best trout fishing in the world)

Favorite sports team: The San Diego Chargers and Padres (Are there any other teams out there that people would want to cheer for?)

Favorite restaurant: Red Lobster

Last book read: The Divine Conspiracy by Dallas Willard

Hobbies: Fishing and golf

If you could live during any era, which one would it be and why?

This might sound boring, but I seriously would only want to live in this time period. I kind of like electricity, cars, microwaves, telephones, computers and flushable toilets. If I had to pick another era it would have to be the time of Christ. Wouldn't you want to hear Him preach?

Three words to describe yourself: Christian, husband & dad

Favorite song: Wow. Too many to choose from (almost anything by Caedmon's Call or Jennifer Knapp)

Favorite quote: This one has really got me thinking the last couple of months: "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him."

Most embarrassing moment: In attempting to praise my senior pastor from the pulpit one day while I was speaking, I fumbled my words and accidentally proclaimed that he had "passed gas" during the opening song. To make matters worse, I responded, "I didn't mean it to come out that way," only to dig myself a bigger hole.

Greatest practical joke (played on someone else): I wouldn't dream of playing a practical joke on

someone else...what an unchristian thing to do.

(Editor's note: This from the co-reigning king of practical jokes??)

Greatest learning experience:

Having children has taught me so much about life, my Heavenly Father and myself.

Testimony: I grew up going to the Catholic Church and was a pretty good kid with a good family. I knew a lot about God but did not know him personally. In the 8th grade I met a friend named Shay who invited me to his church. After spending nearly a year at his church, hearing the gospel both from people at church and from Shay's mom and dad, I responded to Christ one Wednesday night after the youth pastor had shared the gospel with me.

Favorite verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Current church & location:

RiverLakes Community Church in Bakersfield, CA

of years there: Almost 8 years

of years as an XL board member: 11 years

Interns you have trained: Officially, one.

Best story about another board member: Went to speak for Rocky in Yellowstone. We got lost... 'nuff said.

Best youth trip memory: My last summer camp as a youth pastor we chartered this 150 foot ship and went to Catalina Island for a week. Every day we were in a different cove, snorkeling, fishing, skiing, kayaking, etc. Each morning and evening we had our Bible study time on the top deck of the ship. One of the most spiritually meaningful camps I've been at along with one of the most beautiful. What a great combination.

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he was grinning from ear to ear and casually picking the bugs from his gums!

Well that's about it. I retrieved both the money and the windblown young man, so we continued on our way to a memorable summer camp. We even brought most of the kids back – except those two guys we lost while river rafting that were last heard shouting, “Whoa dude, what a ride . . .,” but that's another story.

Disclaimer: The basics of this story (kid on top of bus as youth pastor went back for money) were taken from a true story told to me by Brad Morello about a youth pastor friend of his. I took the liberty of adding the details and telling the story the way it would have unfolded if I had been involved.

✉Chris Riser



Address Updates

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Congratulations to Jeff Miller

Jeff Miller completed his internship in July 2003 under the direction of **Pastor Bryan Ryan** at Berachah Bible Church in Jonesboro, Georgia. Jeff began his internship with **Pastor Chris Riser** at Cape Bible Chapel in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He then later moved to Georgia to finish the program. Jeff continues to faithfully serve at Berachah Bible Church while prayerfully seeking a youth pastor position.

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