



Plans for a Church Health Assessment

By Pastor Ken

The North Oak leadership team desires our church to flourish in our core life in the midst of challenging times. With a passion to lead well and make wise decisions going forward, the elders and deacons began a discussion at our January 2011 retreat about an initiative to assess our health and effectiveness. The desire was to gather objective information concerning church climate and effectiveness according to biblical measures. After prayer and careful research, the Elder/Deacon team is planning to conduct a church-wide listening exercise using an online tool called CHAT.

According to the authors of the survey, "CHAT takes a holistic approach to evaluating church health based on blending together the Great Commandment (love God), the Second Great Commandment (love others), and the Great Commission (evangelism and discipleship)." During October as many people as possible from the congregation and leadership team will be invited to participate (anonymously via the Web) so that we gather as much candid feedback as possible (aiming for at least 25% of the church population). Your feedback is important and necessary in order for our church to grow in healthy, life-transforming ways.

The Elder/Deacon team has scheduled another retreat in November to prayerfully begin acting on the results of the survey. Using Stephen Macchia's book, *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry*, we will study characteristics of church health and develop plans for translating them into the context of our ministry.

Be in prayer as preparations are made for this important exercise in our church life. Ask the Lord that we clearly hear what He is saying about how to shore up our essential strengths and make sure that we are on mission with him. Invite the Spirit of Christ to fuse us together in a spiritual unity that infuses our community with the good news of Jesus.



SHEEP SHAPE

By Pastor John Wiker



How to Live from the Inside Out

Last newsletter we discussed what *Living from the Inside Out* might look like. Today, we'll examine how one puts that truth into practice.

Several weeks ago, several of us attended our district bi-annual meetings. One of our speakers (Michael Cusick) shared some helpful insights which God is using to change my perspective on life and I hope will change you as well.

He asked the following question – (*you get to fill in the blank*) ... **“God feels _____ with me or toward me?”** What would you answer? (*Please stop for a moment and ponder the question*).

Another question we were asked ... **“Imagine ... you enter a room and Jesus is there. Would He light up when you walked in?”** *How would you answer this question?*

If we are “normal American Christians” the type of answers to both questions would be along the lines of performance – or lack of performing.

- If we're doing the “right things” then we think Jesus would be happy with us.
- If we're not doing the “right things” then we think Jesus would be disappointed with us.

As a culture we tend to evaluate our worth by what we do ... by how much we accomplish. We value accomplishment ... *we're into doing* ... and the more we're doing – the more “successful” we are – or so we think. Dr. Phil has a phrase which might be appropriate here ... “how's that working for you?”

“How is it with your soul?” is a question that must be answered.

Mark 8:36-37 NLT, “And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?”

So ... *what does God feel with or toward you?* If you answered ... discouraged, disappointed, or anything other than joy or delight, you've been listening to the voice of our enemy and are squeezed by our culture of doing.

In **Luke 15**, (*please read the passage*), Jesus told the parable (story) of the father with two sons. The younger son wanted and received his inheritance and went and squandered it. The older son did all the “right things.”

The thing we need to understand is the attitude / action of the father.

When the son who did “everything wrong” headed home, the father was looking for him and ran to meet him. The heart of the father was toward the son.

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G O D S M Y
LIFEGUARD
 For A Fresh Breath Of Life



Dear Parents,

I hope you are surviving the back to school flood of opportunities and that your calendar haven't completely filled up. Because of course I have a wonderful opportunity for you as well. Most of us that are parents are filling our schedules based on the needs of our kids and what they are involved with. The primary need of our children is their spiritual growth and sometimes as parents we feel ill equipped to provide the most important aspect of their life. On Sunday October 2 you have the opportunity to get some free equipping and training in this area of teaching faith at home. It is called Extreme Family Makeover Parenting Seminar and it is free for you to attend. The seminar is held at the Countryside Christian Church in Wichita from 2:00 – 5:00pm. The church has paid the registration cost for this seminar. We will have transportation available following first service on this day to Wichita. Please contact me and let me know that you would like to ride down with the group. There are flyers available in the gathering area at church. If you have questions please contact Jeff Neher at 628-8887 or jneher@northoak.net.

Here is what the hosts have to say about the seminar: "This seminar will inspire, motivate and equip parents to reestablish the home as the primary place where faith is nurtured. Come ready to gain lots of practical ideas you can begin implementing immediately to bring faith practices into your home life."

As I think back over this summer it feels like it was the fastest summer of my life. It feels like school got out just the other day and already kids are back in school and the busyness of the school year is upon us. This summer was filled with some amazing things. The trip to the Dominican Republic was a highlight for me. I have prayed for a long time that we would have a mission trip where families could go and serve together. It was so fun to see many family units or parts of family units go and serve together. This trip was an amazing adventure from the very beginning. To watch how God provided for our team through prayer, financial support and the opportunities to share with so many leading up to the trip, during the trip and since we have been home. The team continues to learn as we have a goal of raising \$2500 to provide a generator for one of the children's orphanages where we got to spend part of a day.

Another event that we just did was our 30 Hour Famine. We experienced a very small fraction of what about one billion people experience every day, going to bed hungry. We learned what it was like to be a kid living in Haiti during the earthquake and what it takes to survive following the earthquake. We were able to provide a number of food boxes, blankets and coats for people here in our own community. We were also able to send in \$600 to World Vision to help feed kids around the world! Thanks to all who baked for our bake sale. We ended with a celebration meal where we got to see how the food is proportioned out in our world where only a small percentage had a full meal and where some got some rice and chicken and where others just got rice.

I would love to encourage all of the men who have sons 12 years old and older to come with them to the Men's Retreat in September. This will be a time of great encouragement to the young men as they join the brotherhood of men from North Oak. I hope you will consider bringing your son(s).

I will continue to pray for all of you parents as you fight the good fight for the hearts and minds of your children and do the difficult work of passing the faith on to the next generation.

Jeff Neher

Living Life from the Inside Out ... (Continued from page 2)

The father loved both of his sons.

It's the attitude of the sons that is telling.

- One finally came to the realization that he had "blown it." He sinned against his father – and he received forgiveness and grace.
- The other son was a great legalist – keeping score and never came to the realization that he was loved. His relationship with his father was one of "doing the right things." His attitude is exhibited by **Isaiah 29:13 NIV**, *"The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught."*

If we live "under the rules of men" we will be discouraged, disappointed, when we think of our relationship with God. We end up deceiving ourselves, hiding from the truth, performing so we will be accepted by others and God too. The result causes undue stress, anxiety and lack of joy. We live out of our brokenness which is exactly how our enemy wants us to live.

On the other hand, by acknowledging our sin ... agreeing with God that He knows all about our sin, and that in His Grace, through the sacrifice of His beloved Son – the Lord Jesus Christ – we are forgiven. It's an incredible exchange!

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 NLT, *"So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."*

This is what God says about you. **Do you believe Him?**

Let me share one more passage for reflection ... that gives insight on how to let God change you.

Colossians 2: 6-10 NLT, *"And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority."*

Believe God and what He says about you – reflect on the great exchange and live your life out of the love and affection God has for you!

Sonshine Station "Shining for Jesus"

It has been over a year now since we became the nursery coordinators at North Oak and what a rush it has been! At the time this position was open, Pastor Ken was preaching about finding your place to serve in your church and he talked about whether or not you come to church to "give" or to "take." He suggested praying about your calling and your passion and asking God where you should be serving. Well we both thought maybe we should take this position but it would be a lot of work and are we really willing to sacrifice our time? Then Pastor Ken said "if you don't have the passion, then maybe you need to ask God to GIVE you the passion." He may as well have been preaching directly to us! We took his advice and we asked God to give us the passion. Well God certainly answered our prayer.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." Matthew 7:7-8

Although sometimes it is challenging to fit the extra tasks of scheduling, sanitizing, planning lessons and crafts, and all that comes with this service into our already busy lives; seeing all the kids on Sunday mornings makes it all worth it! What a joy it is to watch them grow. And so rewarding to watch the transition of a child going from being reluctant for their parents to leave them, to running in, ready to play!

There have been a lot of changes over the last year. We now have two volunteers in the toddler room and usually three in the baby room. We have put in place a new check-in system which has made the dropping off process so much smoother and has made a lot of parents feel more comfortable leaving their child. Our biggest hope is that every parent at North Oak would be able to worship God fully during the church service and know that their child is being very well loved and taken care of by us and our wonderful volunteers.

We also believe that children are God's treasures and His little beacons of light (which is what inspired the name). Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

We know children have a special place in God's heart, and now is the time to be molding their hearts into shining lights for Jesus. This is why the toddlers now do a short lesson and craft. We focus on the same story for at least 3 weeks so they are able to retain some of the information. Right now they are learning about the days of creation and most can tell you their bible verse!

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis 1:1
It is so exciting to see them learning and starting their journey towards knowing their Creator!

We are so blessed to be a part of your children's lives and pray that our service in the nursery brings glory to our Father in heaven! "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

Brandy Burkholder and Sarah Schaeffer



JOIN US FOR AN EVENING WITH ANTHEM LIGHTS IN
 A SPECIAL ACOUSTIC CONCERT!!
 NORTH OAK SANCTUARY
 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
 8:00 P.M.
 COST: \$5.00 AT THE DOOR (NO TICKETS)



2011 National Bible Bee



North Oak Community Church hosted a local National Bible Bee competition on August 27, 2011. There were 12 competitors from three states. The National Bible Bee is a project of the Shelby Kennedy Foundation and is designed to help facilitate families discipling their children.

Contestants receive a Bible, Scripture memory cards, t-shirt, and a family study curriculum. The contest involves a written test over one book of the Bible that is designated by the Shelby Kennedy Foundation. The second part of the competition is a random selection of verses from the larger number that each participant is asked to memorize. There are three levels of competition for primary, junior, and seniors. Two of the senior girls had memorized all 800 verses for their level, which they did in just three months. This coming week they will find out if their score qualifies them to go to Nationals in Nashville, TN in November.

The winner of this year's local contest in the primary division was Abigail Wenvlaff from Kechi, KS; the winner of the junior division was Callie Weeks of Brownell, KS; and the winner of the senior division was Laura Hedstrom of Oxford, NE. This is an awesome event. To see these young people hiding God's word in their hearts is so encouraging.

Thanks to North Oak Community Church, the volunteers, and the sponsors of this event.

~ FAMILY ALBUM ~

BIRTHS:

Congratulations to grandparents Pat & Mary Ann Coyne in the birth of Ava Reese Strasser. She was born to Jason & Shannon (Coyne) Strasser on July 5.

Ken & Mary Ann Massey welcomed grandson Zechariah born to Caleb and Sophie Massey in July.

Dave & Stacy (Mike & Cindy Stremel's daughter) Rogers have adopted two children from Ethiopia.

Cole & Traci Vap rejoice in the birth of Danica Hazel. She was born at HaysMed on August 17 at 12:18pm weighing 9 lbs., 7 oz. and 21 in. long. Jeff and Jan Vap are the grateful grandparents.

Congratulations to Brett and Julie Crull who were blessed with identical twins Caroline Louise and Teresa Marie on August 26. Proud grandparents are Terry and Joan Crull.

SYMPATHY:

We extend sympathy to Don Walker and family. Don's mother, Bessie, passed away June 5.

Our condolences to Alvin Schreiner and family. His dad, Richard, passed away June 5.

Former NOCC member, Frosty Hardacre died August 7.

WEDDINGS:

We rejoice with Amy Brungardt and Jason Janzen in their wedding June 4.

CHILD DEDICATIONS:

7/10/11:

Aaron & Patty Larson~~

~~~~Ashtyn Taylor Larson

Eddie & Kara Olmstead~~

~~~~Josiah Edwin Olmstead

Jake & Melissa Sprenkle~~

~~~~Jakson Ray Sprenkle

8/21/11

Jared & Amber Smith~~

~~~~Easton Alan Smith





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Faith@Home Focused Church Seminar



Mark Holmen, one of the leading advocates for faith@home focused churches will be in Wichita October 1 and 2. On Saturday he will conduct a seminar for leaders and potential leaders, discussing strategies to launch a faith@home initiative. Actually, North Oak has already begun this initiative. However, this seminar offers an outstanding opportunity to hear specific ideas and input that will boost this initiative to a whole new level! North Oak has an expanding vision to equip and support parents in passing on genuine faith to their children. This is a wonderful chance to help shape a vision that will impact the faith of future generations who grow up in our church.

The seminar will be held at Countryside Christian Church in Wichita on Saturday, October 1, 9:00am-3:00pm. North Oak is registered as a church so the only expenses attendees will have is transportation and meals. Please call the church office for details and tickets.

Mark Holmen will also conduct his renowned "Extreme Family Makeover" seminar the next day, Sunday afternoon, at the same location.