

south shore fellowship

"it's all about relationships"

bridgman, michigan

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Aloha dear friends and family,

October 2009

Our grandson, Jack, has just turned two. Being a retired preschool teacher I can truly say that I just love the "magic" that happens at this stage of life. The baby part seems to drop off and this little person emerges.

Language kicks in and with it a whole new level of relationship with parents, family, and friends. Jack has a toy airplane and each time he plays with it he has it flying either to Hawaii or to Michigan to see his grandparents. His knowledge and understanding is expanding rapidly and it is so exciting to watch it unfold.

South Shore Fellowship has also just turned two years! It is hard to remember how it all started in the living room of our home with a few friends coming to encourage us along! There have been a few rough spots along the way but Jack and I find it exciting to see the infant stage of church planting dropping off and a new level of development happening. What is emerging is a core of people who are growing in their own personal relationship with God and they are growing closer in relationships with each other.

Our vision for South Shore Fellowship has always exceeded the city of Bridgman. Our vision is to raise up leaders and birth more churches. As we nurture and guide those along whom God has entrusted to us, we get as excited as our son Josh and his wife Taylor do when Jack reaches the next level of development and achievement.

This month, our men traveled several hours away to a men's retreat. Seven guys went! Unfortunately, we missed one in the picture--sorry Christopher. Some of them had never before been to a men's retreat. I asked them to comment on what that weekend meant to them.

"The men of SSF and I had a chance to attend the Foursquare retreat in Indiana this past weekend. At first, I really didn't want to go. But my wife Melissa and Maree both encouraged me to go anyway. I would like to say that I had a great time and felt very blessed to be part of it. Not only did we hear God speak strongly through the speakers, but we bonded closer together as men. I was very encouraged by the young men that

came with us as well. To see and hear their growth was amazing. Men need each other as mentors, encouragers, and teachers to come alongside each other so we can finish the race well. Let me encourage all men--especially if you've never experienced a retreat before, or if you've never felt attending one was for you, or you've been to a hundred of them--take a chance, put the world down for a couple of days, and do it. There is nothing like a room full of men raising their voices together to worship the Lord". - Bill Erkelens

"God really confirmed what I have been hearing from Him. He really spoke about keeping our focus on Jesus. The point made about, what you're focused on will captivate your attention, was absolutely from the throne for me. I believe God is strongly calling each of us to be focused on Him and not on the offerings of the world. The relationship time with the other men and the male youth of SSF was invaluable. I have October 8th and 9th 2010 already on my calendar. HOOOYAAAAA!!!!!" - Dave Cowan



Bill, Brent, Jack, Doug, Andrew & Dave

Not to be out done by the men, the women had a conference that same weekend. We only had to travel 14 miles down the road to New Buffalo. We partnered with our "sister" church, Living Way, for the day. Pastor Gail Prietto and the women from Living Way graciously opened up their facility for the day and it turned out to be so very special.

The theme was "Keep it simple. Keep it real." Gail and I met a few times to plan around the theme. We planned a simple salad luncheon and purposely wanted to keep everything as simple as possible so that everyone could enjoy themselves and receive a special blessing from God that day. Do you know how hard it is for women to keep things simple? Let me tell you, it was definitely a challenge. But I think we accomplished it pretty well.

Our speaker, Liz Doyle, is a wife, mother, grandmother, pastor, missionary & an evangelist. She and her husband travel all over the world sharing their faith...keeping it simple and real. She was such an inspiration to us. Rather than me doing all the talking, I'd like to share these comments:

"I had heard Pastor Liz Doyle speak at our church, SSF, one time. What little I had heard I knew she was a great speaker. She talked to us about going out into the world. She has traveled in many countries. One advice she gave was to tell us not to be afraid to speak up for God. She also said that some times you don't know where the money is going to come from, but it will come. God looks out for us all. Towards the end we all wrote down some problem we wanted help with. Pastor Liz spoke and prayed for each one that wanted prayers. I'm sure everyone felt a lot better after this. What a fulfilling day."
- Lorraine Prince



Lorraine, Mellissa, Christina & Maree

"The women's conference was an amazing gathering from beginning to end. The content of the day was a testimony to God's sovereignty in that He consistently revealed messages He had already been delivering to me through our women's Bible study, Pastor Jack's messages on Sundays, as well as through my personal devotional times.

God used our speaker, Liz Doyle, to convey powerful reminders of the truth. As she led us through Luke 10, we were drawn to three points upon which to focus. The first was that we need to be concentrating on He who unifies us in the Body and not on that which would keep us divided. We also need to be devoted to prayer and willing to hear the Lord's voice and be sensitive to what it is He would have us do. In addition, we need to be committed to take action to deliver the gospel. The enemy wants to keep us from worship, prayer, and studying the Word. Jesus has not only commissioned us to share the

good news, but He has also defeated satan through His triumph on the Cross. As a result, when we believe in Him, we receive the right to be called children of God and are given power and authority in the heavenly realms as well as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to comfort us, guide us, and lead us into all truth.

The Lord used the testimony of His work in Liz's life to inspire boldness and commitment to spreading the gospel in our homes, in our communities, and to the ends of the earth. In all, it was a God glorifying day of worship, fellowship with amazing sisters-in-Christ, testimony, and teaching. I am so grateful to Him for being given the privilege to attend. Thanks as well to Maree, Gail Prietto, Liz, and the other ladies that served as His hands and feet to pull it together and make it happen."
- Melissa Erkelens



Women's conference

"The ladies retreat meant so much to me; as well as meeting Liz Doyle. She made Jesus so simple and REAL TO ME! She was amazing in her past by singing with her guitar about Jesus in a war torn Belfast in 1972. I was blown away...an 18 year old girl just loving Jesus with strangers in war....

What I got out of it for me was this: I asked for prayer for healing for my back and I got it! Praise God! I also received a vision from God during our prayer time while we were seeking God. I saw our worship team singing and worshipping God! She (Liz) is the bomb for a REAL JESUS AND A REAL GOD!" - Christina Cowan

SSF Updates: Please check out our website for audio of our sermons and current bulletins. Jack's current sermon series: "Answers to Tough Questions". This Sunday 10-25-09 "Does Evolution Disprove the Bible?"

Aloha Ke Akua,

Jack & Maree,

Jack & Maree

