

Cornerstone United Methodist Church

1411 Rim Road Fayetteville North Carolina 28311 868-5686

June 2002



Dare to Be a Disciple

I must admit that I have wanted Cornerstone to be a "big" Church. But one thing mitigates against that and will probably always keep us relatively medium-sized: At Cornerstone UMC we have gone out of our way to create a culture of discipleship. We are not interested in helping people live more secularly successful lives. We are interested in shaping people so that the Holy Spirit can make them saints and martyrs. The saints are those whose lives are so consecrated to Jesus Christ that they become heroes of holiness for the whole Church. The martyrs are those who choose to suffer death rather than to deny Christ or His work. In contrast, much of what passes for evangelism today is about giving people exactly what they want.

Church Growth advocates often tell us to attract non-believers by offering therapeutic sermons that help them feel better about themselves or instruct them on how to handle practical problems. Yet, the message proclaimed by Jesus and the Apostles is one of the in-breaking reign of God, of deliverance from the powers of sin, death, and hell, and of eternal life through a relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Likewise, mass-market evangelists tell us that we can attract worshipers by providing entertaining services. In reality, worship is not about evangelism at all. Instead, worship is offering God the honor, reverence, and glory He is due. Many modern evangelism schemes endorse creating a church that treats the unsaved as consumers. But the very essence of conversion is that we turn from self to God and others — from consuming to giving! The reality is that most people want a church that doesn't demand much commitment in the way of time, service, or money — yet Jesus demands that we submit all things, including our possessions, to His Lordship.

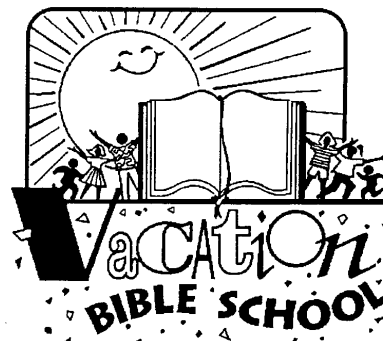
Left to our fallen, sinful mindset we desire "cheap grace." Dietrich Bonhoeffer says in **The Cost of Discipleship**:

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. Costly grace ... is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows Him.

The Church that offers people exactly what they want as a means of attracting the unconverted cannot maintain integrity with the Word of God and the Apostolic Faith. Jesus said it this way: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Matthew 6:24)."

The problem for Christians who live in the West is that we desperately want to serve two masters! We are divided between Christ and the World. As your Pastor,

Continued on page 2



Mark your calendar!

VBS

June 10-14

Bug Safari, where kids catch the buzz about God's love is happening June 10-14! We are in need of more volunteers to make this program the quality program our children deserve. Please be in prayer that our needs are met and please respond to the call if you feel led or are asked to help.

Please complete a registration card for each child who may attend VBS, including children ages birth through 3 who may need nursery care. Please have your friends and neighbors register if there is even a slight possibility that they will attend. "Walk-ins" cannot be accommodated.

Registration is limited to 60 children (due to space and budget). We will continue to accept registrations until all available slots are taken. After that a waiting list will be made. Children who do not attend VBS on the first night will lose their slot and a child from the waiting list will be called, if necessary.

Please contact Barb Hall () for more registration information.

Pastor Ben Continued from page 1

I feel the gravitational pull of all the world offers just as much as you do. However, I have to tell you that there is no way to be a disciple of Jesus Christ while also having one foot in the world. The life of a disciple is one of singleness of mind and heart. With this in mind, I want to offer us a path we can follow to begin this lifelong journey of discipleship.

First of all, what is a disciple? A disciple is *not* just a convert. Just “accepting Christ” does not make you a disciple. Much of evangelism today is mistaken in that the emphasis is on merely leading people to a personal conversion experience. But Jesus is very specific in his Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). He didn’t command us to make converts, but to make disciples. Discipleship begins with conversion, but does not stop there. The Scriptures show us that a disciple is one who loves and obeys Jesus Christ. Jesus said: “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. (John 14:21a).” Also a disciple denies him/herself and takes up the cross of dying to self (Matthew 16:24–26). Real discipleship is so simple that a child can easily be a disciple – but it is so challenging that men and women who will lay down their lives for their country in battle, fear to take up the cross of Jesus Christ.

Discipleship is a process of giving one’s life away completely to Jesus Christ. It means that in every area of life we determine that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will put God first — first in our relationships, entertainments, jobs, time, money, and possessions. It means that whenever there is a choice to be made between Jesus Christ and something else, Jesus comes first. A shorthand for this is that we offer Jesus Christ our *time, talent and treasure*.

• **Time:** A disciple offers his/her time to Jesus Christ. That means weekly worship with God’s people. It means time spent daily in prayer and reading the Bible.

• **Talent:** A disciple offers his/her abilities in service to God and others

through the church.

• **Treasure:** A disciple offers his/her finances to Jesus Christ.

Some of you have noticed that we have a sizeable shortfall in our budget. Some folks have asked me if we have a financial problem. My answer is that we do not have a financial problem... *we have a spiritual problem.*

As pastor, I do not specifically know who gives and who does not. However, I do get a statistical report and what that reveals is that we have about 63 families who attend this church regularly. Of that 63, only 37 families give anything above a token amount when we give our financial offerings to God. Of that 37, only 22 give anything close to a tithe. Only one third of the families who attend this church are actively seeking to be disciples of Jesus Christ in the use of their God-given wealth. That is a spiritual problem.

God commands that we tithe. That means that we offer God 1/10 of our income. As we tithe, God blesses us by meeting our material needs. God declares in Malachi 3:10:

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Martin Luther understood that our giving had to do with our spiritual life. He observed, “There are three conversions necessary: the conversion of the heart, mind and the purse.” Many of us here have experienced the conversion of the heart and the mind. But there remains one unredeemed facet of our lives: our finances. We believe that God has taken care of our eternal destiny, but we do not

have the confidence that He cares enough about us in the here and now to meet our physical and fiscal needs.

The only way to real joy in the Christian life is through discipleship. It sounds so frightening to offer ourselves in this way. But it is what we were created for. If we do not give ourselves away to Christ, some lesser thing will dominate our lives and lead us at least to shallowness and triviality – at worst to destruction. A. W. Tozer (1897-1963) wrote:

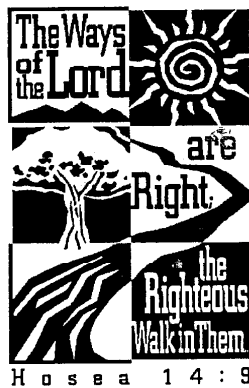
In every Christian’s heart there is a cross and a throne, and the Christian is on the throne till he puts himself on the cross; if he refuses the cross, he remains on the throne. Perhaps this is at the bottom of the backsliding and worldliness among gospel believers today. We want to be saved, but we insist that Christ do all the dying. No cross for us, no dethronement, no dying. We remain king within the little kingdom of Mansoul and wear our tinsel crown with all the pride of a Caesar; but we doom ourselves to shadows and weakness and spiritual sterility.

Discipleship sounds like slavery, but it is the ultimate freedom. Discipleship sounds like weakness, but it is the way to ultimate strength. Discipleship sounds like the loss of all things, but it is the gaining of soul-satisfying richness.

If we answer the call to discipleship, where will it lead us? What decisions and partings will it demand? To answer this question we shall have to go to Him, for only He knows the answer. Only Jesus Christ who bids us follow Him, knows the journey’s end. But we do know that it will be a road of boundless mercy. Discipleship means joy. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, **The Cost of Discipleship**.)

If you are a regular attendee, or member of Cornerstone, I want to challenge you to take the 90-Day Discipleship Dare. For the next 90 days you are encouraged to take **three steps** towards genuine discipleship by dedicating you **time, talent and treasure** to God. As you

Continued on page 4





Inklings Coffeehouse

Where You Can Find Hope, Love, and Coffee
Come and Enjoy Some Excellent Coffee and Snacks While You

Listen to Live Music

Play Games and Mingle with Friends

Talk life...love...art...books...poetry...

Join us on June 8, 2002, from 8:00 PM through 10:00 PM
Cornerstone United Methodist Church
Located at 1411 Rim Road in Fayetteville, North Carolina
For more information call 868-5686

Inklings Coffeehouse operates on the following model

1. To provide entertainment and relaxation in a Christian manner and atmosphere;
2. To encourage fellowship among believers;
3. To provide a "unity-of-the-body" ministry transcending denominational barriers;
4. To provide an alternative to worldly entertainment such as bars and nightclubs;
5. To provide a place where the lost can be brought for low-key, subtle witnessing who would not come to a church service;
6. To showcase local Christian music talent with emphasis on quality;
7. To provide a reasonable level of food and beverage service which will complement the other aspects of the ministry;
8. To operate on a non-profit basis yet be self-sustaining;
9. To cater, to the extent possible, to all ages and musical tastes; but ensuring that the primary purposes will not be lost in overemphasis on Christian rock or other less-popular styles, appeal to children at the expense of adults who want a night away from the kids, etc.; and
10. To avoid "churchy" features such as preaching, traditional church music, altar calls, and other elements more commonly associated with formal church services; and to avoid elements peculiar to specific denominations, including tongues, prophecy, and "praise and worship" services.



Cornerstone Small Groups

CBS(Cornerstone Bible Study)
Monday Women's Bible Study
Wednesday Night Bible Study
Promise Keepers Men's Group
Friday Fellowship
United Methodist Men
Senior High Youth
Junior High Youth

Marilyn Hutson
Joy Semrad
Ben Sharpe
Ken Dye
Jeff & Debbie Hill
Steve Kublank
Brian & Christyn Hahn
Mike & Sue Todd

Let's
Just
PRAISE



Join us for
Wednesday
evening Praise &
Worship followed
by a Bible study
with Pastor Ben.

Get that mid-
week boost you
need by singing
praises to our
Lord!



***Halls - Jeff is in Korea until January 2003**

***Alan Chambers**

***Jon Blake**

***Todd Muench**

*** Those not listed here and all those affected by Operation Enduring Freedom.**

*** The Townsend Family**

Contact Barbara Hall to edit this information or to select a day each week you can pray for these families.

Pastor Ben

Continued from page 2

do so, I commit to pray for you that God will honor His word in your life and that you will be strengthened in your commitment to discipleship.

For most of us, we can bring ourselves to commit our time and talent in a step of discipleship. The real challenge is the commitment to tithe. That's why this is 90-day dare. There are always bills: house payments, car payments, braces, college, new babies, retirement plans. Some of us are saying, "We can't even make our budget now." Well, maybe that's the problem. You need to bring God into the plan. God can do more with your 90% than you can with your 100%. Ultimately tithing is not a money matter, it is a trust matter. What we withhold from God when we do not tithe is not money, it is trust. If we refuse to tithe, then we are basically refusing to be disciples.

I know that many of us are indebted or have expenses that you did not go looking for: legal bills, doctor bills, etc. I want you to try it anyway. If God does not meet your needs (he will NOT pamper your lusts) in that time, then just don't tithe after that 90 days.

I look forward to hearing your testimony of how God transformed your life as you took the dare to become a more fully committed disciple of Jesus Christ

Scars

Some years ago on a hot summer day in south Florida, a little boy decided to go for a swim in the old swimming hole behind his house. In a hurry to dive into the cool water, he ran out the back door, leaving behind shoes, socks, and shirt as he went.

He flew into the water, not realizing that as he swam toward the middle of the lake, an alligator was swimming toward the shore.

His mother in the house was looking out the window saw the two as they got closer and closer together. In utter fear, she ran toward the water, yelling to her son as loudly as she could. Hearing her voice, the little boy became alarmed and made a U-turn to swim to his mother. It was too late. Just as he reached her, the alligator reached him. From the dock, the mother grabbed her little boy by the arms just as the alligator snatched his legs.

That began an incredible tug-of-war between the two. The alligator was much stronger than the mother, but the mother was much too passionate to let go.

A farmer happened to drive by, heard her screams, raced from his truck, took aim and shot the alligator. Remarkably, after weeks and weeks in the hospital, the little boy survived. His legs were extremely scarred by the vicious attack of the animal, and on his arms were deep scratches where his mother's fingernails dug into his flesh in her effort to hang on to the son she loved.

The newspaper reporter who interviewed the boy after the trauma asked if he would show him his scars. The boy lifted his pant legs. And then, with obvious pride he said to the reporter, "But look at my arms. I have great scars on my arms, too. I have them because my Mom wouldn't let go."

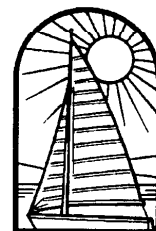
You and I can identify with that little boy. We have scars too. No, not from an alligator, or anything quite so dramatic. But the scars of a painful past. Some of those scars are unsightly and have caused us deep regret. But some wounds my friend, are because God has refused to let go.

In the midst of your struggle, He's been there holding on to you. The Scripture teaches that God loves you. You are a child of God. God wants to protect you and provide for you in every way. But sometimes we foolishly wade into dangerous situations. The swimming hole of life is filled with peril and we forget that the enemy is waiting to attack.

That's when the tug-of-war begins - and if you have the scars of God's love on your arms, be very, very grateful God did not — and will not — let you go.

"He has already tended you by pruning you back for greater strength and usefulness, by means of the commands I gave you." (John 15:3 Living Bible Paraphrase)

JesusLovesMeThisIKnow.com



J U N E

June 2002 July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Cornerstone Pizza Sunday @ Two Brothers!	3 Pastor's Day Off Women's Bible Study	4 CBS 7:00 Coffee House Mtg.	5 Praise & Worship 6:30 Bible Study 7:00	6 Promise Keepers 7:00 Choir 7:00	7 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00	8 Inklings Coffee House 7:00
<i>Annual Conference</i>						
9 Church Council Mtg 7:00 pm	10	11	12	13	14	15
<i>Vacation Bible School</i>						
16	17 Pastor's Day Off Women's Bible Study	18 CBS 7:00	19 Praise & Worship 6:30 Bible Study 7:00	20 Promise Keepers 7:00 Choir 7:00	21 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00	22
23	24 Pastor's Day Off Women's Bible Study	25 CBS 7:00	26 Praise & Worship 6:30 Bible Study 7:00	27 Promise Keepers 7:00 Choir 7:00	28 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00	29
30 Cornerstone Pizza Sunday @ Two Brothers!	1 Pastor's Day Off Women's Bible Study	2 CBS 7:00	3 Praise & Worship 6:30 Bible Study 7:00	4 Promise Keepers 7:00 Choir 7:00	5 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00	6
7 Church Council Meeting 7:00	8 Pastor's Day Off Women's Bible Study	9 CBS 7:00	10 Praise & Worship 6:30 Bible Study 7:00	11 Promise Keepers 7:00 Choir 7:00	12 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00	13

Notes: Mark your calendars for July 14 for our Church Dedication and Open House!

There's always something happening at Cornerstone!

**GOD
NEEDS
YOU!**

Ministry Opportunities

Do you want to take advantage of a ministry opportunity that takes absolutely NO preparation time? Consider serving as a Team Leader or Autism Angel during VBS. Team Leaders escort kids from station to station and have junior high assistants. Autism Angels serve as one-on-one escorts for (3 yrs.) and (9 yrs.) during VBS activities.

For more information on these opportunities, contact Barb Hall at