

## Newsletter for July, 2020

### Dear Church Family,

We are still here MAC, and by His power we will finish this race. There are two races we are in. One, this pandemic, the other the race is described by the author of Hebrews:

[1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

“Endurance” is the key word, and we must admit that our endurance is meager. But we are strong in Jesus when we keep our eyes on Him. He will see us through as a congregation and as individual followers. The real work has been accomplished and completed already. Truth is, we have already won the race.

Presently, I am working on two essays. One is “No Two Alike.” By that I mean that no two Christians are the same in terms of how we express ourselves to the world, and no two of us hold all the same doctrinal points, and last, the kinds of ministries we engage in will vary, often, significantly. This we must appreciate. Some have large ministries, are very accomplished, and widely recognized. Others of us, and I have myself in mind here as well, are or have none of the above, but we keep on going despite outward and worldly encouragements or discouragements.

The second essay is on revival. At the First Baptist Church of Fairfield, CA, where I became a Christian in 1963, we had both Fall and Spring revivals. The idea was that at least twice a year we needed to be revived, because we tended to become rather dead spiritually. This practice was typical of SBC churches, and I know that some continue this.

While a seminary student in 1966, I began pastoring a small country church in Byron, California, near Brentwood, 75 miles from Mill Valley. I pastored there for two and a half years, and from 1967 on it was concurrent with my evangelism in the Haight/Ashbury. And low and behold, we had a Fall and a Spring revival, and the preachers were some of my seminary student friends, one of whom took over as pastor of the Byron Church when I left.

Do you ever feel like you are dead spiritually, or maybe lukewarm, like the church in Laodicea (see Revelation 3:14-22)? I do, and right now I am lukewarm, and I don't like it. So, I need to be revived. But how? This now may seem simplistic or even errant, but I simply acknowledge the truth of the state I am in and look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, to bring me out of my funk. I am going to slow down, spend time in the Word, and read solid Christian literature. Yes, and most importantly, ask God to bring me out of this spiritually and emotionally empty period of time. And until then, I am going to keep on doing the work I have in front of me. I know our enemy would like to see me fall apart and just go through the motions.

Am I expressing something of what you may be going through? I am going to guess this little confession of mine fits you as well. I mean, how could it not? We are all human beings subject to the verities of this crazy world. A revival begins with understanding and admitting we need to be revived.

This Sunday I am going to sing, *Lord, Send a Revival*. You know the song, so let us make this our prayer coming into July. Lord, send a revival to our church and to each one of us.