

What's your...

MADE IN AMERICA VACATION?

details on page 2

FAMILY FORUM

A newsletter for the families
of
Mesa Baptist Church

June 2010

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

by Pastor James Flamm

As I walked along Imperial Beach in San Diego, an abstract sculpture caught my eye. Three separate red posts with curved squiggles waving toward the ocean. My first thought was, 'That's cool, but with the ocean breeze blowing in from the ocean, I would have turned those things around and had the squiggling ends facing the other way so it looked like the breeze was blowing through them.' Sorry. My creative, analytical impulse never takes a vacation. We walked past this sculpture many times traveling back and forth to the pier and small cafés along the sandy beach, each time enjoying the various angles and perspectives of these three abstract posts.



Then, one night, we decided to take the easier route to our home-away-from-home – the street and sidewalk on the other side of the shops and homes, instead of the cooler, more cardio-intense workout through the sand. As we walked past the courtyard where the sculpture stood, I happened to glance toward the ocean at the precise moment and place where my perspective on the abstract changed everything. In that brief moment -- and at that exact perspective -- the posts and the

squiggles revealed and clearly displayed a most intentional statement: ART. Two more steps on the sidewalk, and things again looked jumbled.

Is it strange to say that moment was one of the highlights of my vacation?! The surprise of finding the design and order in what I thought was only abstract was such a fun, even inspiring, moment that I had to keep walking back and forth to see it again and again. (Okay, so I'm easily amused...)

So much of our day-to-day experiences are a matter of perspective. Depressed or discouraged? Your focus is on you instead of others. Overwhelmed or fearful? You most likely are staring at your weakness or inability rather than God's endless supply. Negative? Pessimistic? You are looking at the situation from the wrong angle. Every moment is an opportunity to trust, to grow, to be challenged, to experience and see the Hand of God at work.

Our human perspective is limited. Left to ourselves we will only see the abstract pieces. Disjointed. Meaningless. Or worse, we will see the incorrect meaning and believe it is truth.



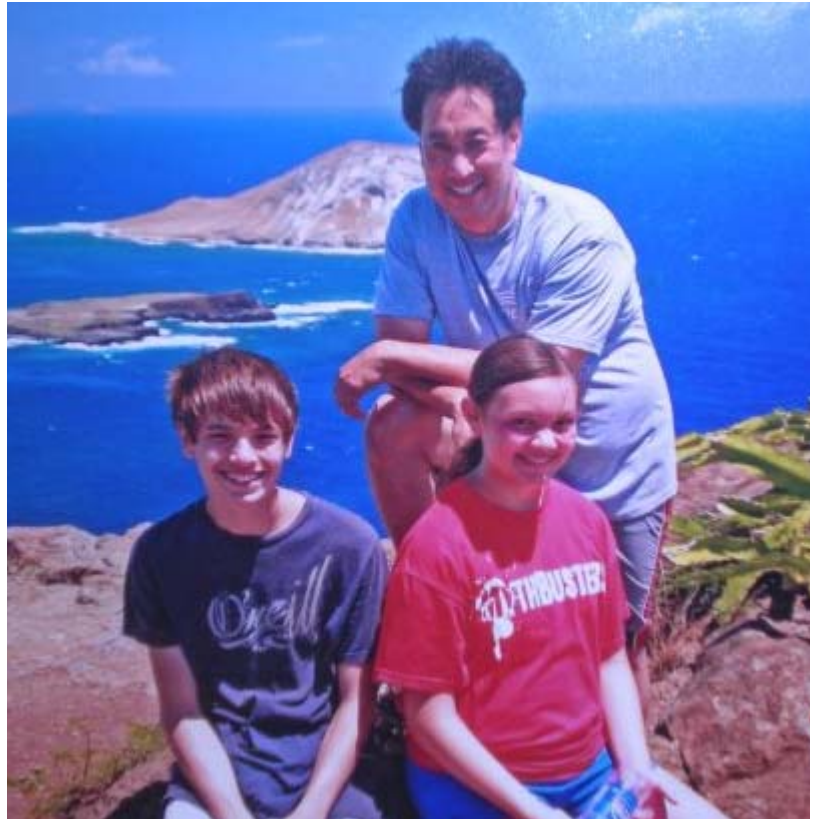
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So, how do we find that perfect perspective? How do we gaze upon the correct position where all the pieces line up properly and the Truth and purpose is clearly seen? By looking at the perfect Law of God. His Word. Meditating on it. Being willing to walk around it, study it, gaze upon it, spend the time necessary to enjoy and discover the heartbeat of the Artist. God's Truth is not out of our reach or understanding, but it does often go against what we want, desire, and think we are entitled to. We must be willing to step away from our assumptions and our claims – our point of view – to walk around to God's perspective on the matter in order to find the beauty in the chaos. For those who honestly seek, you will find that moment of awe and surprise and surrender when the pieces that make no sense right now come together and the Truth is suddenly and clearly seen. Often, Truth is not the easy choice, just the right one.

"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..." - Hebrews 12:2

MEET
THE
TAKATAS!

Warren,
David
&
Rachel



Tell us about your

**MADE IN
AMERICA
VACATION**

What are you and your family
and/or friends doing
for summer getaways?

Give us the details, and we'll share in
an upcoming issue of the Family Forum!

Tell us all about your
summer vacation adventures!

- Where'd you go, and when?
- Who went along?
- What did you do?
- What did you see?
- What was a memorable experience?
- What souvenirs did you bring home?
- Send all the fun details to admin@mesabaptistchurch.org and be sure to include a picture or two!

MISSIONS MINDED *by Karen Fotis*

I've been a member of Mesa Baptist Church for over 19 years, and I'm blessed to work with the international and Muslim communities in the East Valley, thanks greatly to MBC's commitment to the Great Commission which has been used by God to direct my steps and ministry in a profound way.

Mesa Baptist's love for their workers/missionaries has been evident, not only by supporting them with resources and prayers, but also by allowing them to share their ministry during services, thus encouraging their missionaries and mission-mindedness.



Over the years a number of Workers involved in Muslim ministry have come and shared. I'll never forget one Sunday morning when one man taught us that one in six people is Muslim and that

over 90% of Muslims have never heard the Gospel once. This left an indelible impression on me.

In 1999, at an MBC mission conference, the missionaries set up booths in the courtyard so we could meet them and learn about their ministry. That night I signed up to help Ben Joseph, our missionary who works with the international students at A.S.U.

Once a week, I would leave my shift at Motorola and go to the church where Ben held the classes for international women. My job was simple: I only had to talk with the women who attended so they could practice their conversational English.

God used this simple involvement to burden my heart. A friend from MBC began to pray with me concerning God's direction. I didn't know what God had in mind, but I knew something had to change!

In the second year of my volunteering with Ben's class, I met a Turkish couple. My affiliation with them opened up a whole new world for me. After work, I spent most of my spare time socializing with Turks. I learned a lot about them that year, and I read every book I could get my hands on about sharing Christ with Muslims, since Turks are "born Muslim." Often my friends would tell me, "Karen, you should visit Turkey" and tell how God brought

Turkey to me.

In October 2000, I was commissioned by MBC to go to Turkey for a year-long mission. There I studied the language, learned the culture, and -- most importantly -- experienced many things that God used to build me and build my ministry.

Now, living in Tempe, I am a cross-cultural worker with immigrant populations. Because I've lived in a foreign country I have an almost instant rapport with internationals, especially with Middle Easterners. I can identify with their struggles, which allows me to make friends more quickly with people groups who are generally much slower than North Americans in forming friendships. And this gives me an audience for sharing the Good News!

Currently, I'm working with two church plants in Tempe: one that is specifically for the large Persian (Iranian) community in the Valley, and the other focuses on the international student community at A.S.U. I also work with the clubs that reach out to internationals. Four years ago, the Lord allowed me to get into a house a half-mile from A.S.U. Ministry has multiplied as a result.

There are three specific prayer requests that I share wherever I go which I'll share them with you, my church family:

- 1) Wisdom dealing with so many cultures and wisdom in discerning how to use my time with whom, so that that I may be able share the Good News with those who have "ears to hear."
- 2) Administrative tasks which are very demanding on my time.
- 3) Balancing family life with ministry. (My parents are in their 80's and winter here every year.)

I thank God for MBC and how God has used it my life and ministry, and I thank you my Mesa Baptist family for your commitment to encouraging missions and missionaries and your love and prayers for me and my ministry to the International, Muslim communities.



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9a.m. • 10:30a.m. • 5:45p.m.

See us on the web at
www.mesabaptistchurch.org
for full details on all classes and events!

If you prefer to receive this newsletter
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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- 6/20 *Happy Father's Day!*
- 6/21 Soccer & hockey camps week, gymnasium
- 7/4 *Happy 4th of July!*
- 7/5 Cheer & volleyball camps week, gymnasium
- 7/12 Basketball camps week, gymnasium
- 7/17 Sara Jerome bridal shower, 11am, F-2-3
- 7/19 Music & drama camp week, sanctuary
- 7/26 Chandler Public Schools start
- 7/31 Dille-Kilbourne wedding & reception, 5:30 pm
- 8/7 Churchwide pool party, Desert Oasis, 6:30 pm
- 8/11 Mesa and Gilbert Public Schools start

June is Accordion Awareness Month!



SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE *by Mike Backman*

The search committee continues to meet every other week, praying and searching out the godly man called to lead the body of believers here at MBC. Through the requested wisdom of the Holy Spirit, and in partnership with The Shepherd's Staf, they continue to review and qualify resumé's.

May was another busy month for the committee. They processed eight candidates screened by The Shepherd's Staf and forwarded to MBC for review. Below is a summary of search committee activity:

- Two candidates are currently in the MBC interview process
- Awaiting LMPs for two candidates
- Two candidates withdrew
- Two candidates were released after prayerful consideration and/or interviews

Two candidates went through formal interviews with the entire search committee in May. The committee decided not to move forward on the second candidate. However, the first candidate caught the attention of the committee. A preliminary interview was conducted via phone by a few of the men on the search committee. Their recommendation was to move forward to the next interview which includes the entire committee, and that conference call interview was completed on May 1st. There is a possibility that several committee members will visit the candidate's home church to see how the candidate interacts with and responds to his home congregation. It will also allow the team to interview congregants and possible references. The search committee has several other candidates to review before making the final decision to send a team for an on-site visit.

A third candidate went through a preliminary interview with two men on the search committee and, based on the recommendation from that pre-screening, this candidate will go through the formal interview with the entire search committee on June 12th.

The question about what criteria are being used to screen and interview the candidates has come up several times. Last month's Family Forum article explained the processes used by The Shepherd's Staf and the MBC search committee to screen candidates. This month we will explain the criteria used for that screening.

The standards that MBC gave to The Shepherd's Staf were based, in part, on the survey that was conducted at MBC during the first quarter of 2009. That survey listed several qualities that are common to a senior pastor. The congregation was asked to select the top five qualities that they would want to see in a senior pastor, ranking them on the survey from one to five, with one being the most important quality.

One hundred surveys were returned and the results are below:

MBC Senior Pastor Survey Results - April 2009

Description	Total Votes
Strong Devotional / Prayer Life	20
Has the gift of teaching/preaching	20
Provides applicable Bible teaching	19
Approachable and personable	17
Exhibits strong pastoral care qualities	14
Strong and effective leader	12
Practices and Teaches Discipleship	11
Emphasize evangelism	9
Has a vision for the future	8
Emphasizes missions	8
Motivates church staff / lay leaders	7
Loving and caring	7
Is an effective counselor	7
Strong Stand on Social Issues	2
Is a good administrator	1

Another important event in 2009 was to reorganize the structure MBC, including creating an executive pastor position to oversee the day-to-day administration of the church and free the senior pastor to concentrate on casting vision, teaching, preaching, mentoring, and developing the staff and the congregation and shepherding the flock. The following are some of the criteria used by The Shepherd's Staf and by the MBC search committee as part of the screening and interview process:

- **Team player who uses the gifts and strengths of others. Allows others to shine in their areas of ministry;** does not need to be in the spotlight. Flexible in area of direct responsibility and willing to delegate and trust others.
- **Embraces and speaks relevantly to all ages, cultures, economic positions, and personalities. Delivers messages that can be understood by a wide variety of groups.**
- **Visionary/strategic thinker; in partnership with elders, communicates/carries out the vision and mission of MBC.** Draws others into various aspects of the vision.
- **Involved/engaged in the community (personally).** Not on a pedestal. Real, in the Word, leading by example.
- Fits the **profile of an elder.**
- **Dynamic/engaging speaker with willingness to share responsibility.** A good preacher with good appeal, but **faithfully teaching the Word. Encourages people to use God's word.** Gives the Word, tells us where it is in the Bible so we can look it up, and tells us how to apply it. Expository but practical. It can be topical (this isn't about expository vs. practical). We want a biblical focus and we want support for everything that is said. Uses humor. Speaks for 30-40 minutes.
- Skilled in **mentoring and coaching staff.** Demonstrates the ability and willingness to delegate. Allows people to do what they need to do. **Leads leaders to lead.**
- **Passion for daily growth of congregation** – not just Sundays; daily application of God's Word.
- We would **prefer** that he be a "**passive**" candidate, not a guy who is really looking to or needing to move. This is a preference, not a requirement, and each candidate is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Very **passionate and compassionate.** A **builder of the body** who is really looking to build up.
- **Biblical family life/things in order/head of family.** Wife and kids supportive of him. Pastor's family is his first mission.
- **Mature** – Tried and true. **Not inclined to radical or rash decisions.**
- Don't want extremes on age. The person has to have fairly wide appeal; the median age in the church is 42.
- We would like to see him be open to a shared pulpit, where he preaches 70% of the time and others speak 30% of the time. **NOTE:** The 70/30 split in the pulpit is not a deal breaker, and the intent of sharing the pulpit over time is to allow the current staff to hone their skills in preaching and teaching, and would be a part of the mentoring done by the senior pastor.

In addition to the items listed above, both The Shepherd's Staf and the search committee explore many other areas to assess a candidate's intangible qualities, as well. The MBC leadership team has a vision that, when the time comes to select the next senior pastor, there will be internal candidates who have been trained up and are ready to assume that position. Wouldn't it be great to see men trained and groomed at MBC who then go out to pastor other churches? These are some of the intangible qualities that are explored as candidates are qualified and interviewed.

Indeed, May was a very busy month for the search committee as we continue to diligently search for the next senior pastor. As we continue the search, let us carry out the work that God has put before us in sharing the gospel and executing the mission of MBC: to make, mature and multiply disciples for our Lord. And please, let us not lose sight of how the Lord is using MBC to touch lives in His name, even as we continue through our transition!

I encourage you to direct any questions or concerns to me personally, or e-mail them to me at questions@mesabaptistchurch.org.