

The BELL TOWER

VALLEY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Many Roads

Two years ago Ginger and I were coming out of one of the most difficult seasons of our lives. It was a time of both uncertainty and great expectation as we were relying on God to show us what the next season of our life would bring. To our great joy, the road that we were taking intersected in an unexpected way with the road that VCC was traveling. Even now, when people ask me how we ended up here I delight to recount the story of how God brought us to this place.

All of you who are a part of VCC have stories too, of how you came to this place. Some of you have been here for many years, others a few, and still others are new to this family. However, or whenever we arrived at VCC, it would be a mistake for any of us not to appreciate the reality of God's providential care and direction. We are not here by accident. If that is true then there is a purpose for our being here together. The intersection of my life with yours and all our lives with the history of the Tri-Valley is a God-ordained moment of opportunity and responsibility.

It is an opportunity because God wants to grow your faith and continue his work of conforming you to the image of Christ. By connecting with God and this group of Christ-followers you are in a place where you can do this. When we engage with each other in meaningful relationships, journeying together toward a deeper walk with Christ, this life transformation begins to happen.

But it is not just about us. It is also our responsibility as Christ followers to serve each other and our world. All around us, both within and outside of our church, are needs waiting to be met. What a joy it is to give of what we have and who we are to meet those needs.

Finally it is our responsibility to invest in others that which God has been doing in us. By sharing Christ's love with those around us who need His touch, and by pouring our lives into others who are seeking to grow in Him, we multiply our lives as God builds his Kingdom.

This is why I love being your pastor. I love being part of this journey with you. These two years have been a gift and I can't wait to see what God will do next. Yes, we've traveled many roads to get here and now we can travel this section of road together to his glory and the good of others.

Danny
 Danny Hall
 SENIOR PASTOR

If you'll step inside
 this great glass
 elevator

It'll take us up above
 the city lights

To where the planet
 curves away to the
 equator

I want to show you
 something fine

You can see the roads
 that we all traveled
 just to get here

A million miniscule
 decisions in a line...

Andrew Peterson



What's New with Children's Ministries?



New Look

Children's Ministries has a new look and vibe. After years of being connected through puzzle pieces, a long awaited change was needed for our next generation of children. On Sunday, March 6 we would like our church family to come see our new look where students worship each week. Join us between services from 10:15-10:45 for a quick snack and a quick look!



New Check-In

Goodbye lanyards and parent cards...hello quick and efficient! Beginning Sunday, March 13 we will be rolling out our new check-in system. It will allow you to check-in all of your children at one time. We will have 2 separate computer terminals for your convenience. More information will be available at our open house. Please be patient as we all get used to the new system.



Missions Emphasis Weekend | May 14 & 15, 2011

Save the date! Our annual Missions Emphasis Weekend is scheduled for Saturday, May 14 and Sunday, May 15. Back by popular demand will be a wonderful international meal we will share together on Saturday. Our guest speaker this year will be Dr. Hans Finzel, President of World Venture. Dr. Finzel supervised Danny & Ginger during their missionary time in Eastern Europe. World Venture's five global objectives are:

1. Evangelizing the People of the World
2. Extending Grace
3. Establishing Churches
4. Equipping Leaders
5. Encouraging Mission Movements

Dr. Finzel will also be our guest speaker Sunday morning. We will have a single service at 9:00AM during which we'll Skype with Rob & Geri Sullivan of Rafiki Foundation in Jos, Nigeria followed by an extended time of fellowship and seminars with many of our other missionaries:

Michael Towson CALIFORNIA SCHOOL PROJECT
Janae Blea UNCHARTERED WATERS
Steve & Carla McRee SHEPHERD'S GATE
Barbara Saba VALLEY PREGNANCY CENTER
Jeannette & Ken Thralls YOUNG LIFE
David Eckman BECOMING WHAT GOD INTENDED
Debbie Smith CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP
Mark Andrews CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER RANCH
Alvin Thompson CAM INTERNATIONAL
Dick Walker CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SOCIETY
Barry Francolino ENTRUST
Rahda Manickham MISSION DOOR

In preparation for this weekend we will be forming committees to help coordinate. Committee signups will begin soon, watch for us in the Gathering Place. In the interim, please join us in praying for our missionaries and for our preparations for Missions Emphasis Weekend. We invite persons of all ages to join us. Please consider the following list of areas you might serve:

- Saturday Dinner Committee
- Saturday/Sunday Children's Program
- Prayer Committee
- Host Families (Friday/Saturday night)
- Set up/Clean up Committee
- Publicity Committee
- Missionary Magalog (magazine/catalog) Committee
- Small Group Gatherings
- Decoration
- Program Committee
- Air Mile gifts

Watch for additional updates in the weekly bulletin.



Men's Retreat

In today's world, we have a myriad of gadgets; mobile phones, computers, eBook reading devices, electronic game devices and so on, that consume our time and our energy. How do we balance busy lives and latest technology with a relationship with the Lord? This year, at the annual men's retreat, we are going to spend the weekend looking at the intersection of the Gospel with the arts, entertainment, technology, family, and the work place.

Come and join us as speaker Pastor Heath Hardesty, iNVERSION Pastor, takes us through the short but powerful book of Jude, and helps us to learn principles about Gospel cultural analysis. We will practice this analysis together on movies, music, websites, work places, family systems etc. and have a great time eating and laughing together.

VCC's Men's Retreat
"GOSPEL Analytics"
Cultural Analysis & an Integrated Life

A weekend looking at the intersection of the Gospel and

- ::The Arts
- ::Entertainment
- ::Technology
- ::Family
- ::Work Place...

Men, this is definitely NOT going to be a "fast from technology" retreat! Please bring your cell phones, iPads, iPods, laptops, etc. We will use technology to understand the gospel! Optional activities include golf, climbing, and cycling.

WHEN: Friday, March 25, 7:00PM - Sunday, March 27, 1:00PM

LOCATION: Redwood Christian Park, 15000 Two Bar Road, Boulder Creek, CA

COST: Retreat Registration \$175, Golf \$20, Climbing \$21

Space is limited to 40 men, register online at vcclive.org.

Ex-Spain-sion | A Missions Trip *by Jay Ashcraft*



VCC families and individuals will be joining forces this summer as they hit Spanish soil with the objectives of spreading the Gospel and paving the way for church plants in Spain. We will get the biggest bang for our buck possible by packing three Spain Mission experiences into one trip.

Some of us will be distributing the Jesus Film to Muslims traveling from Malaga, Spain to North Africa. Others will help direct Sports Camps in two towns near Seville, Spain. Finally, a third group will participate in a Contact Initiative for the purpose of developing leads for church plants in two towns near Seville, Spain where we will be involved in such things as concerts in the park, face painting, balloon animal making, English teaching, and literature distribution.

At various times our three teams will join forces for maximum impact. We would love to know our team back home is supporting us through prayer while we are on this trip from June 25 through July 4.



What's Going On? | *Financial Update* by Sid Neimeyer

Remember the old song “What’s Going On?” I’m old enough to remember the song, and also old enough that I’ve forgotten most of the lyrics. But I think I recall the sense of the song—the singer is trying to make sense out of the confusion in the world around him. I thought of that song as I contemplated writing this update on our church finances.

Three weeks ago the picture seemed fairly clear. For three of the first four months of our fiscal year, contributions on average met our budget target. Very encouraging. One month, December, did fall quite far below budget (\$82,000). However, a similar thing happened a year ago, so we continue to interpret the lower-than-usual December contributions as due to the fact that during this recession the level of year-end bonuses and commissions are so much smaller than usual.

Based on the above data and interpretation, we forecasted that for the remainder of the year contributions would be equal to our budget. So we projected that contributions for the entire year would be \$82,000 below budget. That size of budget deficit gives us concern, but it’s manageable.

Then February came along. In the first three weeks of this past month, contributions were unusually low. So we expect that February will fall quite significantly below budget. It’s too early to revise our forecast, but we are deeply concerned.

If the trend of the recent weeks continues throughout March, we will then need to invoke budget cuts. Since our annual budgets over the past several years have continually declined, further cuts this year will start to have more apparent impact on our ministries. Please be praying for wisdom and discernment by Elders and Staff.

Guatemala Adult & Family Trip | *Monday, July 11-Friday, July 22*

This will be our 6th trip with Beyond Partnership Ministries. So far we have built two churches in Cambodia, one church in Honduras, and one church and one pastor training school in Guatemala.

Local leader, Oscar de la Cruz, has started more than 20 churches in the Guatemala City area, discipling and providing seminary-type training to young men. Groups from the United States provide funds to build churches where a congregation already exists and has, at great expense, already acquired the land and prepared for building.

We will spend one week with the congregation, helping with the building and with Vacation Bible School, and worshiping together. Then we’ll have three days of rest and reflection on our experience at a mountain lake and a colonial town. We have typically taken families with kids as young as 8, teenagers, and adults. As the trip approaches we will be taking donations of crafts, etc. for the Guatemalan children. You can contact Dave Peterson, davidpetersons@gmail.com, for more information.



Venga A La Fiesta! | Come to the Party!



Plans are underway to take a Family Festival to both Ensenada and Colonet, Mexico, as part of our Mexico short term mission adventure this summer. We will first run the festival in Ensenada and then take it 2.5 hours south to Colonet where we will co-minister with members from La Gran Comisión church to serve this poor, indigenous Mexican Indian migrant farming community in a fun and festive way!

When our trip is over, we will leave booths, game ideas, and prizes with La Gran Comisión church so they can deliver the festival to even more churches. This “do-teach-equip” method is part of our strategy (VCC and La Gran Comisión) to go beyond just giving material goods (which no doubt meets practical needs) and to encourage them to serve as well. La Gran Comisión’s motto is “The poor serving the poor.” We are excited to be part of a team putting this into action!

The Casa de Pan in Colonet, where we will be visiting, serves 80 children a day, 6 days a week, year round while their parents work the fields. Our Family Festival will encourage the pastors, delight the children, and give us an opportunity to bring Christ’s word and love to a neglected community.

As part of our trip, we will also take family photos—which will be the first time many of these families have ever been photographed. We plan to visit families where they live, bring them food, pray for them, and learn about their culture and day-to-day life. This is an opportunity to get up close with a community removed from the commercial influences further north and in the US!

This 6-7 day trip is tentatively planned for early August (exact dates TBD), with an estimated cost of \$600 per person.

If you want to work with the team in advance to build and paint portable booths and photo props, plan crafts and activities, and get to know some terrific VCC members—please consider helping us or joining us on this trip. All types of skills are needed—there are many opportunities to contribute and serve! Contact Terri Estrada at 925-698-0192 to learn more.

Craft Night

Join us (date TBD) for a craft night to create family banners (8”x10”) to share with migrant farming families. These banners will be made of felt squares, which we will decorate with flowers and other designs, to bring messages of love, family devotion and prayer to impoverished families. These banners will be distributed when our Mexico summer mission team visits Colonet. Just bring a pair of sharp scissors to use (and then donate)—felt, needles and thread will be provided. If you have buttons, beads or other trims or embellishments, feel free to bring those as well. Enjoy time with other VCC women while preparing gifts for those less fortunate.

Inspiring Hope...Spreading Love...Giving Life...

These are admirable goals; goals that we each could easily apply to our daily Christian life. They are the goals which are at the core of the lives of Doctors John and Jana Turns and Doctors Giving Back Ministry.

Doctors Giving Back was built out of the needs of third-world communities of Africa. They are currently working in the forgotten land of Ethiopia, Africa. Much of their work is done in the Western part of Ethiopia known as the Benishangul-Gumuz region which borders Sudan. In this region there is only one hospital for it's almost one million residents. The regional hospital, in the small town of Assosa, has only two doctors and one surgeon with limited supplies and medication.

The average ANNUAL income of the residents of Ethiopia is less than \$100 (USD) which makes this predominately rural region one of the poorest in the world. One in five children will not reach the age of five. Many of those who do survive will be orphaned, as adults die before the age of 40.

The sad reality is that these deaths are at the hands of preventable diseases such as malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, diarrhea and AIDS. Unclean water is the culprit that carries most of these diseases into the villages—a staggering 85%. With a clean water program, basic medical care and preventative health education, many of these illnesses can be improved or eliminated.

The mission of Doctors Giving Back is to greatly reduce the incidence of preventable diseases in impoverished and destitute countries around the world. To accomplish this we provide medical care, medical supplies, medications, glasses, immunizations, food, and clothes. We teach communities about nutrition and preventative health care measures and institute sustainable clean water programs.

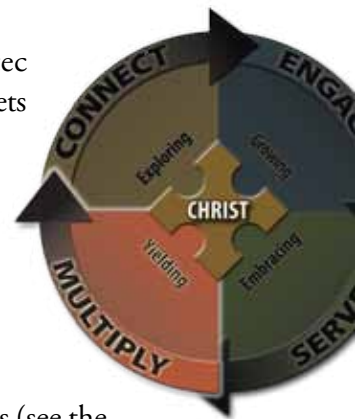
Doctors Giving Back is a medical relief organization made up of individuals with diverse backgrounds including doctors, nurses, teachers, homemakers, students, engineers, accountants, business executives and friends.

Each person is a person with a desire to give hope and to help change the lives of those less fortunate than themselves. You can be one of these people too! You can join Doctors John and Jana Turns on one of their trips to Ethiopia or help out by donating much needed items for their trips. For the next month we will be a collection point and you may drop off items at the church office. You may also arrange to drop off your item donations year-round by contacting Doctors Giving Back at doctorsgivingback@yahoo.com or calling 925-833-5442. You can send a personal check to 7172 Regional Street, #155, Dublin, CA 94568.



Doctors Giving Back Needs:

- Cash donations for water filters, vaccines, medical supplies, mosquito nets, food, wells, medical equipment, hospital renovations
- OTC pain relievers: Tylenol or Motrin (adult tabs & Pediatric children's syrup), Advil, Aleve
- OTC stomach medications: Pepto Bismol (tablets, NOT liquid), Immodium (tablets AND liquid; Zantac 150 mg tablets; Prevacid
- OTC allergy medication: Zyrtec tablets; Claritin or Clarinex tablets (adult and children's)
- First Aid/Antibiotic Creams: Hydrocortisone cream, antibiotic ointment (e.g. Polysporin, Neosporin)
- Eyeglasses and reading glasses
- Knitted or crocheted teddy bears (see the article on page 3)



Learning to Thrive Not Merely Survive *by Kristina Thompson*



Where life is lived in a normal pattern, one becomes two; two grow to four and so on. Today there is a shift from living a normal life, where hope and healing anchor, to one where the “dream” is unreachable or even dead. Anger and despair, which lead to “the disease of violence,” define this life that at best is to be endured. In this environment, survival is the focus, rather than growth.

Under-resourced communities have become expert at celebrating the dead, as evidenced by the abundance of “Rest In Peace” t-shirts seen on the backs of youth when one of their peers is killed. The clothing is symbolic of



a larger burden our community bears; one that says there is no hope in living, only peace in dying.

Live In Peace, Inc. (L.I.P.) exists to help advance a culture of nonviolence, healing and transformation. We at Live In Peace challenge the present

culture through programming, partnerships and personal relationships. Understanding that these problems are not unique to our community and that there are many others working with a similar population, we also seek to help build capability for those striving for our same goals.

Violence of all types is significant in our communities. Gun and gang violence get the brunt of headlines. However domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse lurk in our shadows as well. Through our *Alive & Free* curriculum we help youth in schools, juvenile hall and the community to understand the disease of violence. We provide concrete steps to recognize and change unhealthy thinking and behavior. Our certified *Anger Management* course seeks to provide tools for dealing with the roots of explosive behavior, whether or not one has had contact with the legal system.

Even if it were possible to eliminate all forms of violence today, the work would not be complete. We need communal and individual healing from both witnessed and experienced trauma. In believing that hurt-people hurt people, L.I.P. provides healing from anger, fear and pain through our music and arts programs.

Transformation comes when someone has bought into a “new normal” and is looking to thrive as opposed to merely survive. Understanding that this renewal of the mind can come in many forms, L.I.P. has tried to be responsive to the desires of our community. Our college prep and college program were both born out of youth who wanted to do more than witness transformation; the result is 30+ people in colleges around the country and skyrocketing graduation rates. We also provide Bible Study at the County juvenile facilities and in the community.

At the core of all we do is Navigating. We do not only mentor youth and young adults through trials, we walk with them in success and struggle—all the while pointing to the truth of who they are. Our L.I.P. staff personally demonstrates a life of healing and hope. At the end of the day we all become family, community, pushing and pulling to Live In Peace.

Join us on Sunday, March 6 at 5:00PM in the Seminar Room to meet Kristina and hear about how Live in Peace is reaching the community of East Palo Alto.



Kristina Thompson is a former member of Valley Community Church. She has spent the last 25 years in East Palo Alto where she has been helping alongside her community to help youth and young adults combat a culture of violence and to create a culture where they can be alive and free. The work is actively taking young people from lifestyles which lead to hopelessness, to ones of restored hope and purpose. This can look like reengaging in school after dropping out, leaving juvenile hall and entering college, and other ways of living out the heart of God in her community. Kristina also uses her teaching credential and masters to help create safe school environments through staff training and classes and curriculum writing. From providing arts and music in the school and to the greater community, Live In Peace is raw, cutting edge and a powerful vessel for the kingdom of God.



Teddy Bears for Ethiopia!

Who doesn't LOVE to hug a teddy bear? Think of the comfort they bring to children!

When John and Jana Turns introduced Doctors Giving Back to the Missions Committee, their video of medical ministry in Western Ethiopia elicited a range of emotions in us. The poverty, disease, and lack of sanitation seemed overwhelming, but the smiles on the faces of the children who had received teddy bears, pierced our hearts and brought smiles to our faces, too.

Recognizing the pattern as one I had experience with for the Mother Bear Project, I saw a way that we could contribute to their ministry while here at home. After a few bulletin announcements to recruit knitters, it was interesting to see how God had prepared so many bears in advance of the appeal.

Several were found waiting in dark closets by hobby knitters in our congregation, while others found that they liked to knit them, but not stitch and stuff. In some cases, the stitching up, stuffing and facial features became a challenge relegated to specialists!

Every bear is different, each has a unique combination of color and expression. They reflect the variety of individuals as God has created us. To the children of Ethiopia, who have nothing, they become a prized possession. We will continue to knit, stitch and stuff bears to provide them for the subsequent trips that are planned for the months ahead. In March, we send our first group, praying that they will be a blessing and a symbol of the Love of our God and of the VCC family!



Upcoming Events

Children's Ministry Open House
Sunday, March 6, 10:15AM

Live in Peace Ministry Update
Sunday, March 6, 5:00PM

MS Guys Explosion
Friday, March 11, 6:00PM

MS Girls Explosion
Saturday, March 12, 6:00PM

MS/HS Battle of the Bands
Thursday, March 17, 7:00PM

Friday Friends
Friday, March 18, 6:00PM

Girl's Night Out
Friday, March 25, 6:00PM

Men's Retreat
March 25-27

Church Work Day
Saturday, April 16, 8:00AM

Small Group Leaders Meeting
Sunday, April 17, 12:00PM

Easter Service
Sunday, April 24, 8:00, 9:30, 11:00AM