



Koinonia



Sept/Oct 2009

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October Promises Exciting Opportunities

We are working on a couple of new outreach ideas for Eagle-Pointe. We have a wonderful fellowship here that is facing a couple of challenges. One - very few people are familiar with the Church of the Nazarene, and people are generally suspicious of the unknown. And two - very few people know about us.

We have faithful people and awesome ministries that God is using to transform lives. It has taken us three years to get here, and we are now in a position to plug every member of

the family into one of our strong foundational ministries, so that they may have an opportunity to connect with the heart of God.

God is continuing to purposely and intentionally build our foundation. This is the primary reason I am so excited about our upcoming Auburn "Trick Treat on the Street" outreach at Halloween. This is an opportunity to introduce a lot of families to EaglePointe. We do this by praying with them and meeting them where they are. We are not offering shotgun

prayer and slapping an "I'll pray for you" on the end of a handshake. We will get contact information in order that we may follow up on those prayer requests to follow their story. We are hoping to form a relationship with these people and fulfill our mission-"To build authentic relationships with others in order that we may be a means of God's Grace." In doing this we will also fulfill our vision which is to "SOAR beyond the mediocrity of mere Christianity."

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WILD MEN continue to meet on the last Saturday in Auburn and the second Saturday in Columbus. Attendance has dropped off both in both cities, but this is typical of men. Unfortunately, we tend to be very non-committal - left over garbage from Adam and Eve.

I will be attending a men's retreat the last weekend of this month, along with four other guys from WILD MEN. I am the only one from Auburn attending. Despite the downturn in attendance, those who are stick-

ing with it are reporting that they are learning a lot and continue to see it as a "Means of Grace."

(They say things like, "I enjoy these meetings and get more out of them than I do going to church.")

Pray for us as we continue to reach out to other men, teach them what accountability looks like, and help heal their wounds in order that they may become the faithful men God has called them to be.



Dave Ramsey LIVE!!!

September 19th in Atlanta GA.
Boisfeuillet Jones Theater
Atlanta Civic Center
1:00 - 6:00 PM



Contact the church if you are interested in attending this event. 334-466-8277. As a church we get a 30% discount making the cost of this event only \$36.00 per person.

October Opportunities



We are beginning work on a "Welcome to the Neighborhood Gift Basket." Research tells us that people are most open to attending a new church during "crisis" times of their lives. Crisis in this sense refers to life-changing events, such as the birth or adoption of a child, a wedding, or moving to a new area; of course we also know crisis occurs in the death of a loved one, sickness,

divorce, economic difficulty, etc. The same research shows that people who live in apartment complexes are more open to a new church than those who live in neighborhoods. They tend to be less stable and not as connected within the community. This means there is a greater likelihood that they are not currently involved with another church.

This is the impetus behind the gift basket idea. When people are new, they have several needs: maps, school information, schedules, and bus stop/routes. Often they also need

quick and easy food as they may not have immediate access to their kitchen. We will include informational items about the area, but we will also include pizza coupons, restaurant coupons that offer delivery, grocery store locations, family entertainment options, and the list goes on. Of course, we will also include items that will contain information about the church. Delivering these baskets will give us an awesome opportunity to meet the new people in our community and introduce them to EaglePointe.

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We are beginning work on a DVD for the church. This will be a very professional video that offers a high altitude introduction of the church and a high altitude look at the ministries of the church. In addition,

if someone desires to get more in depth information on each ministry, this DVD will contain interviews from ministry leaders and testimonials from participants within these ministries of how God has used that ministry to create more intimacy between them and Him. We will give these DVDs to visitors, but they will also be handed out at our outreach events and placed in

the "Welcome to the Neighborhood Gift Baskets." Do not be surprised if we contact you and request that you give a testimony on camera. Do not be afraid! We promise neither the camera nor the camera man will bite you, unless of course you refuse to be on camera- then I cannot promise you protection. Ha-ha just kidding.



www.papas-place.org

Things are going well for the Eagle-Pointe Youth. We have had eight or more teens every Monday night.

We did miss one Papa's Place due to a sick youth Pastor, and we held one off-site at the Hornaday's.

The coolest report for the month is that we had two teens saved at the Enfuego concert and festival. Both are regular attendees of Papa's Place - God did a work for these young ladies.

The fall retreat is Oct 2-4, although we currently do not have any teens going.

Quizzing starts Sept 12th. We are still in need of quizzing equipment, so our first quiz meet will be in October instead of September. Quiz practice will be held each Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Hornaday's home.

We will be holding regular Monday night Papa's Place events at the Church.

VISION: Forming spiritually strong children with a passion for the Kingdom of God.



MISSION: Discipling children to love the Lord our God with all their passion, prayer, muscle and intelligence. Luke 10:27 TM

WE WILL: engage children in a holistic approach to spirituality by teaching them the spiritual disciplines in a way that engages their interest, making learning about Jesus fun and exciting, and developing a foundation that will be built upon by our youth ministry (NYI) and our Higher ED Nazarene Learning institutions.

CALENDAR:

Saturday, October 17---District Children's Missions Rally---Millbrook @ 10 am
Saturday, December 5---Breakfast with Santa at Lanett Church

HAPPENINGS:

- ◆ We will start quizzing this month. We will attend zone meets as they are scheduled.
 - ◆ Kids are still memorizing scriptures to get a VBS cube.
- ◆ Kids are still reading missionary books and receiving a candy bar for completion.
- ◆ Kids are still filling up their Alabaster boxes for Alabaster Offering.

A Christian Mysticism?

Is there a distinctive form of life that constitutes Christian Mysticism? Or is there just mysticism, which can be dressed in one or another cultural form, none of which makes any real difference to the substance of the life of the mystic?

These are very difficult questions to discuss in a helpful way. Always, because in coming to clarity about what mysticism is one has to work through, or at least come to terms with, a highly abstract and arcane metaphysical terminology, which people involved in the discussion tend to utilize without adequate knowledge or precautions. But especially today, when mysticism often overlaps or is identified with "spirituality," and spirituality has become a political bone of contention in a world caught up in religious and anti-religious ferment. Spirituality offers to put a transcendental quality on life—a tie to a "beyond" that may well be "within"—without the embarrassing associations with some specific historical and cultural record. Spirituality offers an elevation of life that you, possibly, can practice as a part of your individual "life-style" without having to justify beliefs and practices that you may, for whatever reason, not like to be encumbered with.

An extension of this approach to spirituality is that if you wish to claim someone as a mystic, you have to disencumber them of their religious and cultural specificity and find characteristics you can identify in them or project upon them that are the same in all mystics, and therefore independent of all that makes them Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Christian, or whatever. The highly abstract and arcane terminology therefore comes in very handy, at this point, for it allows you to carry on in a language that hardly ever touches concrete lives and reality.

Such terminology is exemplified in the claim often made—if not as a definition,

then at least as an essential property—that a mystic is one who has attained the status of union with the 'Absolute', however named or imaged, for in the Absolute we must, in the nature of the case, go beyond all names and images. But if one aims at understanding of the mystic with such language, it can serve only as the starting point of the investigation. In particular, what is the "Absolute," and what does "Union" with 'it'—certainly not a person—amount to? Starting from the literary and historical context where such language originates and is most at home, the Absolute is the "All," the whole of reality, which is undividedly One, and lies beyond all characterizations that can be assigned in human thought and language. 'It' is ineffable. To attain the status of union with the All, on such a view, is to come to the realization that you are in fact identical with the All. That this is how things really are, and the consciousness of your individuality or separate existence is an illusion. Union is not a matter of becoming identical with the All, for you were never anything else. In your unenlightened state you did not know you are the All, but as you become enlightened you, as it were, "discover" it.

Now once you get a clear view of this understanding of "union with the Absolute," you see immediately that it is not a "timeless, perennial mystical tradition." Rather, it is one highly culturally-bound, historical tradition of metaphysical claims and ritual behavior. And it excludes from the outset the beliefs and most of the rituals of all the great theistic religions on earth, and of the vast majority of human beings on earth. You have to accept its quite specific metaphysics and its illusionist interpretation of the ordinary world as the basis for understanding mysticism, which then turns around and supports the illusionist interpretation. "Union with the Absolute" turns out, on this interpretation, to be anything but a kind of common ground where earnest and fair-minded people might meet to enjoy to flow of a spiritual life together without regard to concrete religious forms of life.

Union with the Absolute also can be understood in a distinctively Christian man-

ner, and one with substantial overlap on the other theistic religions. The key differences from the illusionist interpretation are two: The "Absolute" for the theist is understood to be a Person. And union with the Absolute, thus understood, consists, not in identity with Him, but in personal relationships of knowing, feeling and willing, on some substantial analogy with what is to be found among human beings in their better conditions. It involves conscious attitudes and actions between God and the human being, and then harmonious actions together with the divine and the human. Each side contributes to the relationship—though obviously not in the same proportion. Such a union is aptly described as "God with us." It is less a status than it is a modulated flow of life in which transformative experiences of God come and go, along with a constant undertone of divine presence interwoven with the events of a normal human existence. In the records of Christian life, this relationship is often thought of as a journey toward God that is, at the same time, a journey in God. A readily available source for studying such lives anecdotally would be William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. But reports and testimonies of out of those lives are widely available.

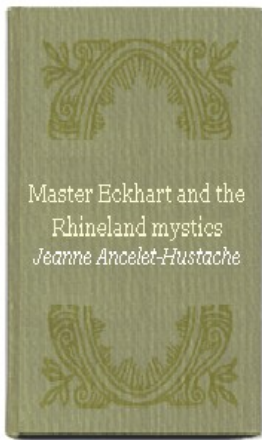
Of course the source for understanding such a "with God" life is the Bible. For example, the Twenty-Third Psalm is a straightforward description of the human experience of union with God—once you understand that the writer is not engaging in lofty whistling-in-the-dark, but relating his actual experience and condition of life "with God."

The entire Bible conveys a picture of a life of personal union of God with his people, and the New Testament interpretation of how Christ lives in his people becomes a *central* part of the Christian

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

cont. from pg. 3 understanding of life, especially for such passages as the Gospel of John chapters 14-17, Colossians chapters 1-3, and Galatians 2:20-21, to mention only a few passages. James Stewart's *A Man In Christ*, or the Introductory Materials and Notes to *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* can guide anyone further in studying along these lines. Albert Schweitzer's *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* is also a very useful source.

Certainly 'nominal' Christianity, or Christianity merely as a social form, does not involve union with God on the relational model. That is always a sore spot within the social/historical reality of the Christian movement. From the earliest centuries, however, Christians who have thrown themselves into the actual following of Jesus Christ have lived from their experiences of union with God. They have always insisted that correct belief and outward conformity is not what the life in Christ is about. A long line of famous and not so famous Christ-followers have kept the "mystical" substance of their living "union with the Absolute" alive down to the present time. And they have usually been in trouble—often very serious trouble—with the nominally "Christian" people,



leaders and institutions in the midst of which they lived. "Spirituality" was used as a term of derision to apply to Madame de la Mothe Guyon and her associates, in the 17th Century, because of her insistence upon living a life of intimate, experiential relationship with God. The "Rhineland Mystics," and most notably Master Eckhart among them, had earlier suffered similar reproach and persecution from "official" Christianity. Both his critics and his admirers have assigned Pantheism to him because they have not read him carefully and did not understand the theological language in which he spoke of the mystical relationship of the Christian to God. (See Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Master Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystic* for excellent information and interpretation of these particular Christian mystics.)

One of the standard things that misleads people in approaching Christian mystics is how they frequently mention the loss of consciousness of themselves in their most ecstatic experience of God. Loss of self awareness is in

fact a common human phenomenon, and not one that occurs only in religious or mystical experiences. But this loss never implies, to Christian mystics, that they cease to exist as individuals or that they are absorbed into the Absolute. Theirs is a different metaphysics, which is one of persons in relationship, not of an illusory separate being dissolving into the "All."

Now of course there are many forms of mystical experience and mysticism. Even atheists have mystical experiences. But there is a clear distinction between the enduring and powerful mysticism implicit in the Christian tradition and that in the non-theistic world religions. Here we do not even raise the question of which is best. But the idea that there is a mystical life that stands free from the specific forms found among human cultures, and that one can actually live such a life in the course of routine human affairs, is simply a fanciful ideal that cannot support the weight of the personal and ethical heroism life requires of us. One can no more live a life of effectual devotion to good from the resources of "the timeless, perennial mystical tradition" than you can paint with color but no specific color.

The specific "color" or Christian mysticism is devotion to Jesus Christ. There is a lot of room for spelling out exactly what that means, and a lot of ways of putting it into practice. Pretty clearly this was the "mysticism" of Florence Nightingale, as is shown from her explicit language, the people she consulted with, and the context of religious life in her times. Her departure from various details of the nominal or real Christianity she encountered around her is better explained by her devotion to Christ than by any reversion to plain-wrap mysticism or to non-orthodox beliefs. The overriding question faced by most professionals today, including nurses, has to do with what they are really devoted to, and what are their life sustaining resources, in pursuing their profession. An honest, thorough inquiry into the possibilities here is what is called for. Are there any preferable alternatives to an all-out, experiential devotion to Christ? Then let us find them and live them. If not, let us live in union with the Absolute who is Jesus Christ.

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Nazarene Missions
INTERNATIONAL

NMI REPORT SEPTEMBER 2009 Betty Smallwood

Remember that September is Alabaster month. We will receive the Alabaster Offering on Sunday, September 27. Bring your Alabaster boxes.

EAGLEPOINTE's World Evangelism Goal for 2009/2010 is \$2877. With the help of all, we will reach our goal.

World Evangelism Fund Supports

- Outreach ministry in 155 world areas
- More than 770 missionaries were deployed from 34 world areas in 2007, including Mission Corps volunteers and tentmakers.
- Monthly pensions for 320* retired missionary units; ("units" consist of couples and single missionaries)
- 40 Bible and theological colleges, 11 liberal arts universities, and 5 vocational and training schools—with 40,801 students enrolled

Cont on pg 5

As God closed a door for the Women's group in a home, he opened a door in an apartment complex! I love it when God answers our prayers through an unexpected, unsolicited thought! When a thought comes we wonder, "Is this God or is this me?" Then we must make a decision. Wendy listened, received and acted... "By faith not knowing," she obeyed.

"By an act of faith Abraham said yes to God's call to travel to an unknown place that would become his home. When he left he had no idea where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8, The Message)

Pray for us as we go

EaglePointe Church of the Nazarene

440 N. College Street
Auburn, AL 36830

Phone: 334-466-8277

Email: pastorjeff@eaglepointenaz.com

Website: eaglepointenaz.com

NMI from pg 4

- 2 hospitals, as well as community-based health care/medical clinics
- Literature in 67 languages
- Casa Robles (Nazarene Missionary Retirement Center)
- The facilitation of Nazarene Compassionate Minis-tries, Work & Witness, Alabaster, and World Mission Broadcast
- Administrative costs to facilitate minis-tries and services to 14,567 churches and 4,123 church-type missions around the world
- Total amount raised for World Evangelism Fund in 2006 was US\$48 million.

We can extend our ministry throughout the world by giving to the World Evangelism Fund. Isn't that encouraging for each of us?!

Respectfully submitted,

Betty
Smallwood, NMI
President



Without God we can't...without us God won't...

We are looking forward to the new location God chose to meet with us. I am also excited about the possibility and the visibility the new location will offer Eagle-Pointe in the community of Auburn. There is already talk that the convenience of the location will provide the opportunity for other women in the apartment complex to participate in the group which could possibly open a door for EaglePointe. Our women's group will begin meeting at the new location on September 23, 2009. We will be reading the book, *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan.

God has called us to be His light in a dark and broken world...

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven." (Matthew, 5:14-16).

Thanks again to Dean and Tracey...
Respectfully Submitted,
Judith S. Hardy, MS
Licensed Professional Counselor
Nation Certified Counselor.



EaglePointe Building Fund

The church consists of the people. There is no mistaking that a building does not a church make. However, EaglePointe would eventually like to work towards the purchase of property and a building one day, for our people. For this reason, we have created a building fund. Feel free to contribute to this fund any time you wish.