

VOLUME LXXXVIII  
October 2018

## THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



# Family FESTIVAL

*OCTOBER 27, 2018*

Submit your comments to our Editor, Jacquie Hinton, about "The Shepherd's Staff;" and, any other *thoughts* you might have about the publication that you feel will be constructive or interesting to our readers. You may do so by emailing us at: [newsletter@pahumpcc.com](mailto:newsletter@pahumpcc.com)



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## CDI

PCC leadership has been considering it for years. In 2014 Village Missions endorsed and embraced it as a key strategy for equipping Christians in the churches served by VM and developing future leaders for Kingdom work. It was listed as a Short-Term Goal in the PCC 2018 Annual Operating Document. Last March, we had the founder come and share the vision with our church family. And now, we are on the verge of offering this opportunity to our church and community.

What is it? It is CDI: Village Missions' *Contenders Discipleship Initiative*. To borrow from the website ([vmcontenders.org](http://vmcontenders.org)):

*The Contenders Discipleship Initiative (CDI) is a two-year program offered by Village Missions to equip Christians for ministry within their local church and to prepare those who are called for full-time ministry as missionary pastors.*

*CDI is a program that equips you to know what you believe concerning Christianity, why you believe it and enables you to “. . . contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3 NKJV). The program enables you to grow in the Christian walk through rigorous studying without quitting your job or going into debt. It also prepares you for ministry, whether in your home, among your friends, in your local church, in a mission field, or as a full-time pastor.*

As if this isn't enough to encourage you, CDI is also being offered *tuition-free!*


Hundreds of thousands of dollars (donated from various people, churches and sources) has gone into making this a viable and valuable alternative to a traditional Bible School/Seminary education. Students are only asked to purchase a minimum of textbooks and supplies and to prayerfully consider donating to the ongoing ministry of CDI as we share these resources with churches and people throughout the country and the world.

Last month, as we celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of Pahrump Community Church, I shared a brief history of our church and our life-long affiliation with Village Missions. That column was primarily focused on the “50.” This month I want us to get a glimpse of what the “*and Forward*” might look like.

It is my desire that our church family might continue to

*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
(2 Peter 3:18)*

I want this to be true of everyone who is a part of our wonderful church! From those who are very young to those who are well into their golden years. As long as God has us here we should be committed to making the most of our time preparing for eternity in Glory. CDI is not only for someone who feels called to vocational full-time Christian service—it is for anyone and everyone who wants to better understand God's Word, better grasp what it means to live a Christ-honoring life, and make better use of his/her God-given gifts and abilities.

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All this being true, it is also my desire that PCC become more of a *sending Church*. Through the years we have occasionally had the privilege of sending someone into the mission field. A few have gone into foreign missions; a few into home missions; and a few into rural missions (including Village Missions). My prayer is that this becomes more of a norm than an exception. I envision PCC becoming known as a church that raises up many Christians who will be sent out as full-time ministers in various capacities! I believe CDI may be the tool God will use to fulfill this vision.

God has richly blessed this church for fifty years! As we look *forward* to the coming years, I believe the best is yet to come!

Pray for us as we anticipate launching CDI in early 2019.

Prayerfully consider whether you might participate in this wonderful opportunity to further develop in Christian maturity.



***CONTENDERS DISCIPLESHIP INITIATIVE***

***EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS FOR MINISTRY WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH***



## Recommendations: Unworthiness

There's a great line from the 1995 remake of the movie *Sabrina*. At one point, Sabrina asks her dad what the uptight and serious Linus Larrabee was like when he was younger. His response? "Shorter."

I'm sure that any season of self-evaluation will reveal that we continue to struggle with the sinful patterns that have plagued us as long as we remember. There are transgressions in my life that God has been sanctifying out of me since He drew me to Himself when I was four and a half years old. In January of '95, I was a diminutive and condemned legalist. I loved following rules and found my worth in how well I could "be good." God, in His mercy, impressed on me that I could never "be good" enough. I could be saved only through His gift of salvation through Jesus and He made me a new creation in my living room in Worthing, South Dakota.

In the twenty-four years of new life I've been given, I've continued to fight against this sin nature mind-set of being able to earn God's approval. I know what the Bible teaches and have had to preach that to myself again and again. God calls us to holiness, undoubtedly. He not only commands us to "be good;" He commands us to "be perfect!" We must never let grace give us license to pursue anything less than absolute Christlikeness. At the same time, it is vitally necessary that we not let our pursuit of absolute Christlikeness blur our understanding of grace. I often need help with the latter of these.

I don't know much about Brennan Manning. I've not read anything else by him and hadn't really heard of him before I read this month's *Athenaeum* Approbation. From the book, I know that God saved him from alcoholism and from a pretty rough past. I can't vouch for all of his theology and I think I've detected traces of Christian mysticism of which I would counsel people to be leery. That being said, nothing stood out to me as being outright inaccurate and his brutal and biblical presentation of God's grace outshone whatever other complaints I might have.

*The Ragamuffin Gospel*  
by Brennan Manning


### Discovery

A few months ago, I referenced finding a book in a thrift store. When I do my browsing, I scan the rows of books subconsciously waiting for one of three things: a title to stand out to me, the "feel" to grab my attention, or the publishing house to click with my mental catalog of reputable book distributors. If any one of those three parameters is met, I'll pull out the book to see if it's worth my time.

I guess it was a couple of years ago when I was in our Salvation Army thrift store and saw the spine of *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. I couldn't recall where I'd seen this book recommended to me, but I knew that it was a source I respected. Upon reading the back cover, it looked fine but it wasn't my typical fare. I debated for a little while but eventually caved to the included endorsements by names I trusted.

### Summary

By way of introduction, Manning includes "A Word Before" to sketch a picture of those for whom the book was written. I typically shy away from indelicate and intentionally inflammatory writing (and there's some of that in this book that grates on me a bit), but I appreciate that Manning doesn't pull any punches. *The Ragamuffin Gospel* was written for "earthen vessels who shuffle along on feet of clay... for the bent and the bruised who feel that their lives are a grave disappointment to God... for smart people who know they are stupid and honest disciples who admit they are scalawags. *The Ragamuffin Gospel* is a book I wrote for myself and anyone who has grown weary and discouraged along the Way." (15)

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The book begins with an assessment of so much of what goes under the auspices of Christianity but is in fact simply a churchly disguised legalism. The author then moves into the breathtaking endurance of God's love for those for whom He has died. Throughout His ministry, Jesus made it clear that He did not come for the righteous, but for sinners (Luke 5.32). "In short, Jesus hung out with ragamuffins" (51). The Gospel came not to put a stamp of approval on our own attempts at righteousness but to reveal to us our utter lack of anything we can contribute to our salvation. When we move past the point of trying to set ourselves right with God in our own power, Manning argues that we then have the freedom to rejoice in God's goodness. He speaks of observing God's marvelous grace in the everyday stuff of life and of how we ought to respond to the gift of Jesus' love. There's a heart-wrenching chapter on our need to face our brokenness before we can truly appreciate God's offer of salvation. He follows that with a handful of explorations of just how our reception of grace impacts our interactions with others. The author suggests that we must be willing to want God as He is and to (as the Apostle Paul says) boast in our weaknesses. When we recognize our status as ragamuffins at the foot of heaven's door, we begin to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ.

#### Boon

As I've flipped through the pages of *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, I'm realizing I need to reread it. Nothing in it revolutionized my way of thinking. I don't think I would even say that anything Manning wrote changed my conception of God's grace. Instead, it provided me with another set of eyes with which to see the same Good News I've known since I was a young boy. I think it's entirely fitting that a book that presents one of the most honest and graphic pictures of our hopelessness is also one of the most joyful that I've read. I teared up as I looked over portions by way of review. How many times have we heard that we can't have the good news without first having the bad news? I am a broken man, but I serve a King who cares for the broken. I need regular consistent reminders of my weakness and of God's overcoming love for His sons and daughters. *The Ragamuffin Gospel* provided me with those reminders.

#### Approbation

Don't let this be the only book you read this year. I alluded up front to the fact that there are portions here and there that aren't as precise as they ought to be. Manning's style includes a number of stories and quotations that make for very easy (and pleasant) reading but that at times come from sources that leave something to be desired. I would tell you to read the book wisely and with the Bible nearby, but isn't that good counsel for everything we take in?

With that in mind, you need to meditate on God's grace. I don't care if you've been a Christian since the middle of the last century or if God has drawn you to Himself within the past six months. In 1 Corinthians 2.2, Paul says, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." To live the Christian life properly, we must keep God's goodness and our utter inadequacy at the forefront of our minds. Manning will help you do that. Whether you need a loving punch in the gut to rob you of your self-sufficiency or a compassionate hand to pull you out of despair back to the throne of grace, I'd encourage you to read *The Ragamuffin Gospel*.

Ever only by God's grace,  
 Pastor Caleb






## Sunnyside Community Church Damascus OR

We trust this finds you well and rejoicing in the goodness of God. We are giving praise to God for His sustaining grace as we continue in ministry with Village Missions. The first Sunday in October will mark 22 years as Village Missionaries. Although much has happened in those 2 decades, it doesn't really seem possible it is that long.

Our biggest praise is one that the Bible says angels in Heaven rejoice over...sinners who repent!! Last year a couple began coming to church obviously seeking the Truth. They began attending a weekly Bible study and were eager to know more. It has been a joy to watch God bring them to salvation. Their concern is that their two teenagers will also come to faith in Christ but have been careful to not "push" as this is all new to them. Their teenage daughter started coming to youth group about 4 months ago but said she just didn't know if she believed what she was hearing. Courtney continued to come to youth group. She loves being with the other teens and many times is the last one to leave. She started coming to church with her parents; helped in VBS along with her mom; went to summer camp with the kids. She spent a lot of time talking with her counselors and Guy (he taught the Bible lessons this year). Saturday night, as she and her friend from youth group sat on the dock talking about all Courtney was hearing and thinking, Rachel asked her if she wanted to pray and trust Jesus as her Savior. Rachel had the privilege of leading Courtney in a prayer of confession and expression of faith in Christ. We are so thankful to God for His work of mercy and grace in this family. Their teenage son is attending another evangelical church with a friend from school. As yet he has not trusted Christ so we pray for God's gracious work in his life.

VBS went really well and we had more kids that were from the neighborhoods nearby and some who were unchurched. We pray for continued opportunities to reach out to these families.

We have a weekly Bible study at a nearby mobile home park "sponsored" by a couple from Sunnyside so we can meet in the club house. Three ladies who live in the park attend as well as the couple mentioned above. The initial study was a short evangelistic study in Mark. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, Guy is teaching a survey of the Bible.

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Another weekly Bible study is geared for the young men in the church and others they invite. Pray for these young men as they meet and for the man who is teaching.

Guy has emphasized one to one Bible reading relationships and currently there are approx. 15 people getting together reading God's Word. Each pair has their own meeting day/time and they might meet weekly or less frequently depending on their schedules. Pray that more would desire to read the Word together.

Good News Club and Kidz Club will start soon. Pray for the leaders and pray for more children to be involved.

Guy and another man from the church family will be in the Philippines October 5-19. Guy is one of three speakers at a conference for Filipino pastors. This will be his 3<sup>rd</sup> time at this conference. Most Filipino pastors have little or no formal training and few study resources so these few days are precious to them as they sit under the teaching of God's Word. They will receive a bundle of carefully chosen resource books as well. After the conference Guy and Brent will spend the rest of their time ministering to pastors in smaller settings. Please pray for God's provision of funds for this trip. Besides travel and room and board for Guy and Brent \$2500 (1/3 of the cost) is needed to fund the conference. (Each speaker/sending church is asked to underwrite the cost.)

Our boys are back in school. Benjamin (20) is working on prerequisites for nursing. He is also working as a CNA at a memory care facility. It has been our joy (particularly for Geni!!) to have him participate occasionally in the worship services as pianist. When he's not playing the piano he plays trumpet for the service. He is involved in one to one Bible reading with one of his high school buddies... via skype. Pray for spiritual growth and maturity. Jonathan (17) is a Senior and is laying out plans for college. He is playing trombone in the Jazz band and guitar for the worship band at school. He usually plays trombone at church but has recently picked up the bass guitar. Pray for his spiritual growth and maturity, too.

Thank you, PCC, for praying for us and supporting us financially. You have been faithful partners for all of our years with VM. We thank God for you!!

In Christ,  
 Guy and Geni Shields



Guy and Geni Shields are Village Missionary missionaries our PCC church family supports.



September, 2018

Mike & Karen Kotecki  
@ gmail.com  
jm.kotecki or karenk52

Over the summer in Germany, we continued to meet weekly with military singles & families to memorize and study one verse a week. At the end of the summer, we traveled to the US to visit one Navigator Army ministry and a conference in Georgia, then to Colorado for a Senior Staff Gathering. The photos below tell the story!



Cadets West-point.  
High school, college right>  
Soldiers, Families 2nd row



Long time Staff friends Glen Eyrie Colorado



The Navigators, P.O. Box 6079,  
Albert Lea, MN 56007-6679  
Mission Account #40956 Ph: 866-568-7827  
To mail us a letter: Akazienstr 10a, 66849 Landstuhl  
Germany  
<https://donations.navigators.org/SpecialPages/DonorMaster/staffDonation?id=S40956|40956>

Thank you very much for your partnership, which enables us to proclaim Christ and to help others grow in knowing Him, to make Him known, and to help them do the same!

Mike and Karen Kotecki are Navigator Missionaries our Church family supports.





*Save the Date!!!*

# **A Time to Dance... 2018**

**Childrens' Benefit**

**November 10, 2018 6:00PM to 9:00PM**  
**Sun City Anthem Ballroom**  
**2450 Hampton Road, Henderson**

**Early Bird Tickets**

<u>Early Bird Prices</u> <u>Until 9/30/18</u>	<u>Table</u>	<u>Single</u> <u>Ticket</u>	<u>You Save</u> <u>\$/Ticket</u>
\$50 Premier	\$355 (9)	\$45	\$5
\$35 Preferred	\$255 (9)	\$30	\$5
\$25 General Admission	\$160 (10)	\$16	\$4

**Early Bird Tickets: Call Jim at 702-468-9831**  
**Or email request to [ATimetoDanceLV@gmail.com](mailto:ATimetoDanceLV@gmail.com)**

Regular Prices after 9/30/18

\$50 Premium Seats	\$400 for Table of 9
\$35 Preferred Seats	\$270 for Table of 9
\$25 General Admission	\$200 for Table of 10

## **A Time to Dance . . . .**

Come join us at the 3rd Annual Time to Dance Event on November 10th at the beautiful Sun City Anthem Ballroom.

We will have a variety of delicious hor d'oeuvres and open dancing before the show, featuring performances by many talented ballroom dancers. 100% of the net proceeds will be contributed to **Good News Clubs of Southern Nevada.**

It promises to be a fun evening for a great cause . . . . hope to see you there!

*Our Church Family supports Susan Mackert, the Director of CEF of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas, NV*



## Montana School of Biblical Studies (SBS)

It has been a while since I had to endure the harsh summer Pahrump has to offer; but, by the grace of God I made it.

Now I am stepping into something totally new as I head to Lakeside Montana to do their School of Biblical Studies (SBS).

This next step in my missionary journey is about laying a foundation of truth in my own life that I can pass on to those God calls me to.

I am so thankful for the network of Christians that have supported and partnered with me. You have all been a blessing to me.

While I am in Montana I intend to keep you all updated on what I am doing and I have two ways I will do that.

I will let you know how I am doing overall as well as give you highlights of what I am learning in the word. I will also be restarting my Sojourners series which is where I highlight the missionary journey of an individual and share the wisdom they have learned.

Please pray for me to be focused on God as I study His word and for my family while I am away.

With love in Christ,

Ben Michael

P.S. Feel free to email me at any time I would love to hear from you: [benjaminwichael@gmail.com](mailto:benjaminwichael@gmail.com)

Benjamin Michael is a "Youth with a Mission" (YWAM) missionary our PCC church family supports.



**ANNUAL FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL  
AND  
CHILI COOK-OFF AND PIE BAKE-OFF  
AND  
GAMES AND THINGS!!!!!!**

**OCTOBER 27, 2018  
ADMISSION IS FREE**



**GAMES AND  
THINGS**



## EDITORIAL PAGE

### MY ENCOURAGERS!

*Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. Acts 4:36-37 NIV*

I am not one who is able to make a "quick" decision. This is not based on my own assessment; but, on my own past experiences. All the quick/rapid decisions I have had to make have been disastrous! I do not think the results were because of my circumstances but because of my insecurities. You see I look at all things under pressure as NEGATIVE circumstances. So, I respond to that circumstance – in fear and defensively.

Over the years this has caused me to respond according to **my** experiences and not to **the** experience. As you know God knows all things. Do I need to tell Him my fears, my tears – my needs, my deeds? Of course not! So, in His infinite compassion and knowledge, He responds with love for me.

I want to acknowledge His ever presence in my life by recounting how much He knows that I **can** react in a functional way. But, I need a "cheering" section – an encourager – a person who fits that need.

So, He has provided me with a "Barnabas" to prod me into doing and being what I need to be at the time I need it. However, I have been even more fortunate and blessed to have **TWO** Barnabas' in my life.

I love this quote by Dave Willis:

"Be an Encourager! The World has plenty of critics already."

Thank you, Lord, for the two Barnabas' in my life! Thank you that they love me, scold me and enfold me with patience when I am unable to function rationally and intelligently.

There is a lot going on in my life right now that require me to make decisions that are very hard for me to make intelligently and productively. Yet, these two "encouragers" have stepped in to help me chose my path with kindness and love. I KNOW these two are not in my life by chance but by God's choice. It is just another way for Him to let me know He is "ever present."

I wonder how many of you are encouragers. An encourager does not demean your decisions but provides alternatives when they feel you are not making with right choices. And, these are done with love, patience and without criticism.

Ask yourself, "Do I encourage, or do I criticize?" "Do I offer advice, or do I offer my opinions?" "Do I believe my way is the only way; or, do I suggest we discuss alternatives?"

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Who do you know that needs “encouragement” and not “analysis?” Who do you know who needs a friend and not a counselor? Who has God placed in your life to be an encourager? Give thanks if you can name your “encourager.” They are few, rare and far between. But, God knows all your needs and provides you with only the best.

I am blessed! I have a “cheering section” who are there to yell “Rah!” or “Bah” whenever I need it.

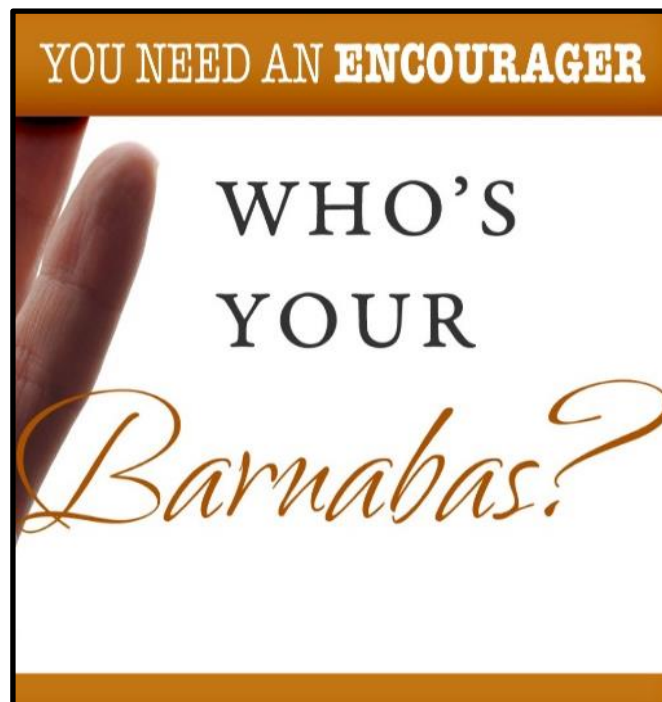
When things are dark all around, you need an “encourager” not a critic! You need a friend not an analyst. You need a Barnabas as an encourager and Jesus as your friend. This is a combination that never loses because they have your back and your front.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for placing these two women in my life! What would I do without them? What can I do with them? I can be supported, encouraged and directed.

I would like to encourage you to be an encourager when it is needed. Just one “atta girl” or “atta boy” is a prod that can be both electric and stimulating. But, even stronger are the words:

“As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Joshua 1:5

God is always with you; and He often speaks, acts and directs through others – your “encouragers.”



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