

# FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Issue XI  
November 2011

BEYOND 735

## Our Mission

First Evangelical Church exists to communicate the Word of God to produce faithful followers of Jesus Christ who love, worship and serve Him for the glory of God.

## Our Vision

As members of the Bride of Christ, we purpose to:

- EXALT THE LIVING GOD THROUGH WORSHIP
- EXAMINE THE WORD OF GOD THROUGH INSTRUCTION
- ENCOURAGE THE FAMILY OF GOD THROUGH FELLOWSHIP
- EXTEND THE LOVE OF GOD THROUGH EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS



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## Pastor's Pensées

Influence as an Instrument of Care and Friendship

Cole Huffman

I've been pondering the scope and shape of influence again. I say "again" because I thought my mind was made up on the matter in that I concluded years ago that influence is something for God to grant not us to seek. To seek to influence others or to seek to become influential seemed arrogant to me, a kind of posturing that incurs God's rebuke, like Jeremiah's scribe Baruch received, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not!" (Jer. 45:5, KJV).

But I erred in equating influence sought with arrogance found. It is better to say that a potential or even particular fault of influence sought is arrogance. But arrogance does not automatically follow. I agree with John Dickson's assessment in his book *Humilitas*, that "influence is not bad in itself. If I sincerely believe that an individual or organization is best served by moving in a new direction, influencing becomes an instrument of care" (p. 135). I hadn't considered it from that angle.

When I was church planting ten years ago, our church's mission statement included the word "influence." We were seeking to be "a worshipping community of influence." This was shorthand for our belief that people genuinely responsive to God will exert

some measure of discernable influence for Christ on the people around them.

The caring aspect in our desire to influence our city must not have come through though, because someone back then challenged the inclusion of the word "influence" in our mission statement. The challenger equated the aspiration to influence with the asphyxiation of arrogance. The desire to be influential—even in Jesus' name—could really not be sanctified. It was a noble intention but with ignoble means. We had good hearts but didn't we know the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9)? I gave in to the critic at the time and moderated the phrasing by saying that influence was better given by God than sought by me or you.

The contrast is true enough. It is preferably better for God to put us in places of influence as we cannot always pare away from our intentions the desires to make much of ourselves or assert our own agendas. But in making the contrast it is not necessary to create a conflict between influence given and sought. I see now the error in that judgment.

Recently I was reacquainted with a classmate from Dallas Seminary days. We had not seen each other in many years. He lives in New York and was in

Memphis speaking at one of our sister churches. His ministry is to international ambassadors and presidents. He's almost like a pastor-at-large to the UN. Of Asian descent, he is more readily granted an audience with world leaders.

I was struck by how he described his ministry: "a ministry of friendship." Many of the global leaders he gains audience with are lonely and receptive to his seeking them out. He wants nothing from them other than to be their friend—a friend who is an instrument of care: praying for them and seeking to serve them (he has a doctorate in biochemistry and biotechnology, so he can advise on such matters) in Jesus' name.

My old seminary classmate is not a man of wealth or power or privileged status. He does have expertise to offer in bio-fields and was once highly-placed in an office of his home country's government. So he knows what government workers experience and this makes him an even better friend to them. But he does not charm through looks or impressive physique or snappy dress. He's not a Dale Carnegie disciple. Yet he wields extraordinary influence with powerful people because

he is, in Dickson's words, "an instrument of care" to them.

I think of how Jesus addressed influence and influencing in Luke 16. It's kind of surprising in that Jesus utilized a most unusual example: a "dishonest manager" whose dishonesty cost him his job, but whose shrewdness in "making friends for himself" earned him an admiring commendation from the one who fired him. How the dishonest manager made friends for himself—through actions of caring, no less—is the cue Jesus wants us to take in spreading our influence to making friends for "eternal dwellings."

In the final consideration, the instrument of care that is influence is a tool of friendship. And most of us realize friendship is as good a thing to seek as be given.



## WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

### Nov. 2

Chicken Rotel or Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce, Dinner Salad, Garlic Toast

Soup and Salad Bar – Tomato Basil Soup

Smores & Ice Cream

### Nov. 9

Taco Salad

Soup & Salad & Sandwich Bar – Chili w/ beans

Key Lime Squares & Ice Cream

### Nov. 16

Fried Chicken, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Roll, Dinner Salad

Soup and Salad Bar – Vegetable Beef Soup

Apple Pie & Ice Cream

### Nov. 23

SOUP NIGHT  
HAPPY THANKSGIVING  
(Vegetable Beef)

### Nov. 30

Pulled Pork, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw

Soup & Salad Bar – French Onion Soup

Lemon Pie & Ice Cream

*Upcoming Baby Dedication Class  
Sunday, November 20th.*

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*Upcoming Baby Dedication  
Sunday, November 27th*

*If you wish to have your baby dedicated, please  
contact Jacki Stieferman at 683-7700 or  
jacki@firstevan.org no later than  
Wednesday, November 16th to register for the class.*

## Memphis Ministries:

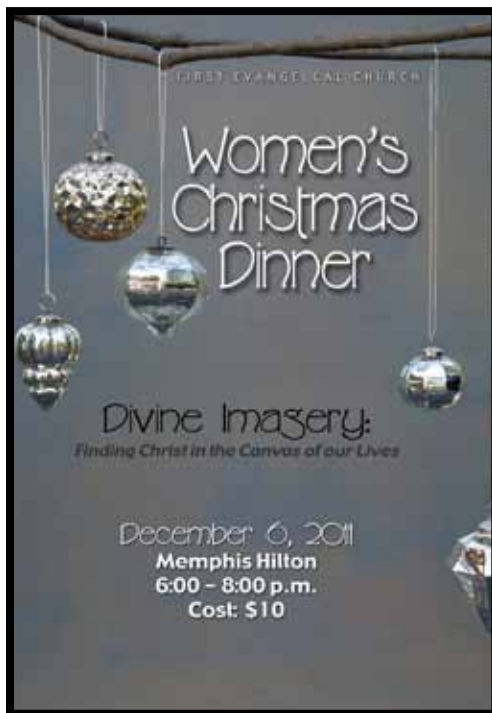
We are encouraged by your excitement in participating in the Matching Gift Program. We gained insight into your giftedness, your commitment and your passions and value where you are already engaged and making a difference in the Kingdom of God.

Even though you had not seen our purpose statement for the program, your answers to the questions on the application validated that we are going in the same direction. Our purpose statement includes:

1. By increasing the role of church members in local ministries, there will be an increase in the development of individual church member's compassion and character as a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. As individual church members are strengthened in their walk with Christ, they will be a stronger witness and encouragement to others within our church body while the local community benefits by the love of God being expressed in the work of evangelism and missions.

Thank you for taking the time to be a Champion for a ministry that is making a difference!

We will process your application and have the response to you and your agency by the end of November.



**Men:** If you would be willing to serve at the Women's Christmas Dinner at the Hilton, please contact Paula Mayberry at [paula@firstevan.org](mailto:paula@firstevan.org). This is a great ministry to the women and their guests. Thank you!



Come to First Evan's International Market & Lunch and purchase hand-crafted products that will help the poor, the vulnerable, and survivors of human trafficking and similar injustices.

## INTERNATIONAL MARKET

**November 13, 2011**

During our Missions conference last spring we put together an international market selling clothing, jewelry, supporting Indian pastors with buffalos, and learning about social injustices. The market went amazingly well and fast. All of the money that we received from the items went to supporting victims of sex trafficking, slavery, and other social injustices around the world. We also had a great success in supporting 13 buffalos to pastors in India. They have been greatly encouraged by our willingness to support them.

On November 13th, we are bringing back the market with more items and more opportunities to support foreign nationals. We are trying to raise money to build wells for clean drinking water in Northern India, Moldova, and Sudan.

# FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

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## CLASSES, WORSHIP

**9:15 - 10:30 a.m.**

Traditional Service (Sanctuary)  
1st NewSong Service (gym)  
Adult Sunday School classes  
Children's KidSong

**10:45 - 12:00 noon**

2nd NewSong Service (gym)  
Adult Sunday School classes  
Children's Sunday School  
classes

## WED. NIGHT DINNERS

Served between 5:15 and 6 p.m.  
Cost: Adults: \$5, Children: \$3

## November 2011 Calendar

**1st** – Deadline for Baptism Applications

**6th** – Communion

Women's Christmas Dinner tickets go on sale

**13th** – International Market (1st and 2nd hour)

Combined Worship Service

Baptism/Congregational Meeting (1 service/no adult S.S.)

Missions Luncheon

**15th** – H2H A.M. ends for the semester

**16th** – H2H P.M. ends for the semester

Financial Peace ends

**17th** – LLL Thanksgiving Lunch – 11:00

**20th** – Baby Dedication class – 2nd hour

Missions Luncheon – Saunders

**21st** – LLL Movie Day (1:00)

**23rd** – Thanksgiving Eve Soup Supper (5-6) and Service (6-7)

**24th/ 25th** – Church Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

**27th** – Baby Dedication