



Wellspring

Articles of Inspiration and Transformation

July 15, 2018



Loving People to *LIFE*: Relational. Relevant. Bold.

The art depicted on the front cover was painted by Karin Zaldaña-Moran during the Worship Service on May 20, 2018. Karin is a college student who grew up attending the Solidarity children and teen program. He is now pursuing an education in psychology and selling his art.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

Barbara Balent, Director of Community Relations

Wellspring Editor



I see things from my office here at PPC.

I see things I didn't expect to see from my window.

I see our neighbors. I see us.

I see Valencia High School students strolling through our campus on their way home from sports practice or school. I see families and couples walk by the office looking for help from Camino Immigration.

I see ordinary people of PPC and Solidarity working together for the Kingdom of God right here in our neighborhood.

During VBS I saw awesome, adult volunteers shepherding their flock of kids around the campus and cheering them on when they needed help or were upset. Some of these volunteers have brought tears to my eyes watching them love these children, some of whom they have never met before.

I have watched the Summer interns, Luke, Aleen, Maria & AJ become friends, planning, working, learning and playing together. I have watched these interns learn what it means to be true leaders, getting a glimpse of Kingdom building. They are learning to do great things in our neighborhood.

I have watched the high school cohorts arrive back on campus so tired, but energized after working with the Solidarity Summer program in our neighborhood.

I have watched the Solidarity Merge Teen group frolic on our grass as our PPC folks finish cooking their Monday BBQ dinner. They are comfortable here.

I have watched excited children attending VBS and our summer camps gleefully learning about God, science and gardening alongside children they have never met before.

This summer, as well as last, we are collaborating with Solidarity, serving and ministering to the local, neighborhood kids, teens and youth, alongside our own PPC kids. We hired two interns from PPC and two from the Solidarity Community and our teen cohorts also represent both entities.

I don't see these people as Solidarity people or PPC people anymore. These people are Kingdom of God people. They are our neighbors and are woven into the community of Placentia and this place that we call church.

I also see, everyday, the painting by Karin from my desk. Come in to the office to see it! To me, this painting represents the intersecting lives of the children, youth and adults in our local neighborhood and church. We are different but we are woven together, as God intended, with no barriers. I see the people in the white light of the picture melting together and intersecting, overcoming the black space that was once an empty canvas. Our church is now a part of the canvas of the neighborhood.

We are now truly neighbors.

God is good. All the time.



ATTENDING TO THE THINGS THAT GOD OWNS

Tobin Wilson

Money and possessions are intimately spiritual, because healthy spirituality is truly material. I say this because many would like to bracket out money and possessions (read politics and economics) from religion so that we “can stick to religion and stay away from politics and economics.” Unfortunately, this kind of thinking does violence to the Biblical story in a manner that is neither in the Bible nor true to reality as we experience it.

- God created in Genesis 1 and looked at his work and declared it “very good.” The material world God created out of nothing is very good.
- God gave people work to do; to tend to the animals, the fields, and to name stuff—to steward God’s gifts. Our work is material and to be stewards of what belongs to God.
- The prophets were intimately concerned with the treatment of aliens, widows and orphans. The material world is important for those seeking to live in the realm of God.
- God became a human being in Jesus Christ. We call it the incarnation. We celebrate this specifically at Advent and every Sunday for that matter. Matter certainly matters.
- Every Sunday we pray that it “would be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Spirituality must never be broken apart from materiality in order for it to be truly spiritual.
- At the end of the Bible the new heaven will come to earth and transform earth into heaven (Rev 21). Heaven is the material earth and cosmos fully transformed.

Now that we have surveyed why matter matters and that spirituality is material, the notion that we stick to religion and ignore politics and possessions just doesn’t fly according to the book that we look to for all things of God.

This past Sunday I talked about living into abundance. If you were not able to attend, I invite you to listen to it on the www.ppc.church website. It is admittedly a deep dive. ***One definition of stewardship may be attending to the things that God owns.*** Stewardship is important in our life together for these reasons:

1. God owns everything. Money and possessions are gifts from God that we don’t own or possess. They are given to us as a trust from God in order to steward. The notion that “I earned it and can do with it what I want” just does not fly with our book’s storyline.
2. God calls followers of Jesus to live differently from the rest of the world that leans heavily toward ownership, possessing things, and unchecked economics (see number 4). It is no surprise that the golden calf in Exodus is a bull much like the iconic *Bull* symbol found on Wall Street. Pharaoh did not have enough, Rome did not have enough, and Wall Street says we never have enough. AND YET, people living by the way of the realm of God have enough because God provides manna and quail, food and clothing, “our daily bread” as the Lord’s prayer we recite states. Israel, the early disciples and now the church are set apart from this “we never have enough anxiety” to rest in the enough of God’s provision.
3. Since God is the owner, and we are the stewards, the next question is “to what end”? Simply, the common good and the flourishing of all creation: the actual planet, the cosmos, birds, animals, teeming

things (read little bugs, and ocean life) and humankind. The Church is the Jesus-initiated movement of people in the world that are for the earth, for the cosmos, for the birds, for the animals, for the teeming things and for human beings because that is what the Trinity is for as the Creator.

4. Money and possessions are not neutral. They can be a source of injustice or justice. Negatively, free market economy unchecked believes that the autonomous individual is rewarded for their hard work with wealth and “each person has a right to do whatever they want with their own money. Those that don’t work get what they deserve (I am glad God does not love us like this).” As a result, there are no neighbors; there are rivals, competitors, threats to the “rainy-day fund.” When neighbors are recast in this non-Biblical light, predatory strategies of money and possessions go from Biblically illegitimate to Wall Street legitimate and we are left with altruistic “charity” at best. It is why one cannot serve both God and Greed.

Positively, when God owns everything, we steward that which already belongs to God based on a trust that God has left for the movement of people called Church in the world today. This movement of people called Church is for the flourishing of all people, as God intends. In this Biblical narrative, there is room for money and possessions to become tools for transformative justice, “on earth as it is in heaven.”

5. For these reasons and many others it is important to give to first to Christ’s Church. This is the most spiritual act of surrender and devotion that I can think of. Giving a tithe, or more, or less, or until it hurts is returning to God what has always been God’s. Jesus instituted the Church as his hands and feet in the world. PPC was the first group of people thinking about how to reach Placentia for Jesus Christ. The favorite water charity rarely does this. The favorite arts project is not thinking about Placentia. This is startling but true. ***Let me be clear, we give first to the General Fund at PPC with a literal tithe because PPC is one of the few groups thinking about sharing Jesus Christ with Placentia and because Jesus established the Church as his material re-presentation on earth.*** Then we give over and above to other not-for-profits in the neighborhood and around the world. Those other NGO’s are important, and serve a very important function, but they ought never replace the local church.

Perhaps, you are beginning to understand why money and possessions are the heart of the discipleship matter. It goes to ownership (God or you), motivation (gratitude/grace or guilt/greed), and ultimate end (common good or charity/altruism). If God maintains ownership, then we are the recipients of a multitude of good gifts. Our response is gratitude for the gifts of God at every level. We ought to be so overcome by these gifts that our motivation is to share with our neighbors out of the abundance of God gifts so that more can flourish and the common good overflows to all, starting across the street.

After my message on July 15, someone was overheard saying, “Why didn’t he say that during stewardship month in the fall?” Great question. Your Session, Empower Committee, Equip Committee and your pastors believe that money, possessions, and stewardship are discipleship issues and ought not be reduced to a campaign. In other words, this topic ought to be a way of life and not reduced to a “campaign that we run” for one month a year. But. Every. Single. Day.

My hope is that this brief teaching will inspire you to begin to give or to give until it hurts.

I only have one word left to say: #grateful!

Tobin



FIVE AMAZING GIFTS

Pastor Alfredo Delgado

On July 8, I led my first of two workshops planned with PPC Equip Committee on behalf of my Doctoral research project. We started our session by asking the participants to draw a hand with the palm facing up and to write on each finger and thumb the most significant gifts that they have received. After a while, I also asked them to repeat the process but to do it with PPC in mind. The question was: What are the five most significant gifts that PPC has received?

That might be a good question for you too. What are the five most significant gifts that you have received? According to your perspective: What are the five most meaningful gifts that PPC has received?

After tallying the answer to the two questions, these were the most repeated and highly value gifts that our workshop participants came up with:

Personal Level:

- 1) Faith in God
- 2) Family
- 3) Friends
- 4) Spouse/Partner
- 5) Life

Congregational Level:

- 1) Members
- 2) Pastors
- 3) Campus
- 4) Heart for Mission
- 5) Generosity/Finances



As part of our conversation at the workshop, we also talked about the importance of living our lives based on what we have received instead of what we were lacking.

We were asked: Where is your focus?

Instead of asking the question what's wrong with my family, my society or me? We get to ask: What is right with my family, my church, my community and me?

It reminds me of Psalm 103: 1-2

O my soul, bless GOD.

From head to toe, I'll bless his holy name!

O my soul, bless GOD,

don't forget a single blessing!

Count you gifts and never forget a single blessing!

Pastor Alfredo Delgado





I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD

Mindy Plick, Director of Children's Ministries

"The Lord your God is the God of all gods and Lord of all lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God who doesn't play favorites and doesn't take bribes. He enacts justice for orphans and widows, and he loves immigrants, giving them food and clothing. That means you must also love immigrants because you were immigrants in Egypt"

-Deuteronomy 10:17-19

Each evening as I hug my children goodnight, my heart hurts at the reality that there are approximately 3,000 children who have been separated from their parents at the U.S. border. Those children don't get to cuddle with their moms and dads at bedtime. They don't get to hug them, kiss them, eat with them, talk to them, or even see them. As a follower of Jesus, I struggle with the current state of our nation's broken immigration system.

Last month, I was invited to help lead a Prayer Vigil for Families Being Separated. I joined with other faith leaders from Camino Immigration, Matthew 25, World Relief and several local churches in an evening of lament, prayer and call to action in response to the brokenness at our border. Here is what I shared with the children and their families at the prayer vigil that evening:

"God seems so big... we feel so small. That's where Jesus comes in. He came to this earth and entered into the small spaces, the quiet spaces, the hurting spaces, the spaces filled with conflict, the spaces filled with brokenness, the beautiful spaces, the scary spaces. And when Jesus was on this earth, He spent so much time with children. He listened to them, laughed with them, comforted them, and He valued their lives.

He still does that today. Today, He hears the prayers of the children who have been separated from their parents at the border. He sees them as beloved. Their lives have value. They are His. And in the same way, He sees the children here today. He sees YOU. He sees YOU as beloved. YOUR lives have value. YOU are his. He hears YOUR prayers. So, let us join the children who have been detained in prayer together." [6/24/18]

We made space for the children to write or draw their prayers on colorful strips of paper, read them aloud, and attach them to a prayer station at the front of the room. For those of you who weren't able to attend this prayer vigil, please take a moment to read some of the prayers of the children. Take time to lament. Take time to pray. And finally, take time to listen for God's voice in all of this. May our prayers move us to action.



Prayers of the Children

"Dear God, please help the children to get back home safely."

"Dear Jesus, help children get back with Mommy and Daddy."

"Dear Lord, I hope that the kids who are in danger will be protected by you. I trust you that you will take care of them. You're stronger than anything. Please make sure that they can be with their family. Please make sure they're safe."

"I pray that the kids are safe in their shelters and let them hear God's voice watching over them. Let them dream at night about their mom and dad."

"We kids need Mom and Dad. Don't take them away."

"God I pray that the children get home safely. I hope they live happy lives."

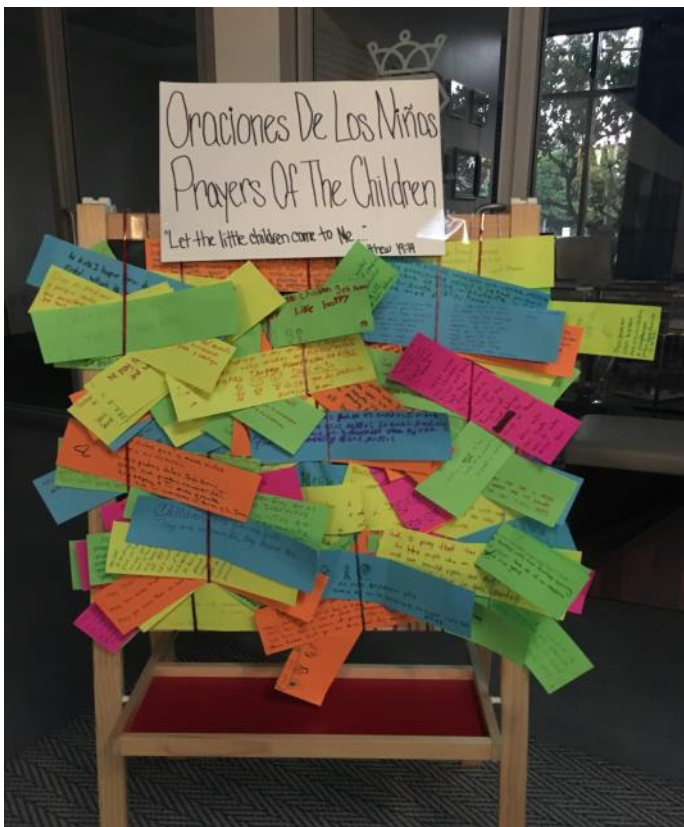
"Jesus, help the people who don't have houses and make sure the kids stay with their moms."

"Jesus, bring the children back home."

Amen.

"When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God"

—Leviticus 19:33-34



El Sauzal Food Distribution

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Our light was very bright on the day of the Food Distribution at El Sauzal Orphanage and the surrounding community. God's name was honored. It was gratifying seeing how people were attentive waiting for our arrival, I only wonder if they knew it was Jesus who was visiting them.

There is one story I would like to share with you. On one of the stops we did there was a man that approached us. He obviously saw we were giving out food. He wasn't well dressed, and had a look like he hadn't eaten for days. He had a look in his eyes of despair and sorrow.

He asked if we could give him some food and said he had a family nearby, He would stumble in his words in trying to explain to us where he lived. It almost sounded that he was lying, and as he started to speak he picked up the three beans that had fallen on top of the open trailer. He started to eat them and it almost sounded he had broken his teeth from biting on three hard beans. He would break down the beans and eat them, I never had seen anybody try to eat raw beans until now.

I didn't care if he was lying, I only cared he was hungry. Everybody present automatically knew what was the right thing to do. We immediately gave him ¼ sack of beans and a ¼ sack of rice. He probably wouldn't have been able to carry any more as he walked away.

I only wonder if that was Jesus walking away...

With Great Love

Fermin Bueno Mercado, Elder





PPC YOUTH PLANTING A SEED OF LEGACY

Garrett Gerhart, Director of Emerging Generations

The spiritual discipline of prayer can seem rather complex. A few weeks ago, we had a summer Bible study on this very topic. Some of the questions brought up were:

- Does prayer change God's mind?
- How does God hear all of our prayers at the same time?
- Does God wait to act until we pray about that specific thing?

We stepped into this topic, and into these difficult questions. Yet, at the end of the night we concluded that prayer is one of the most significant ways we can't act out our faith. It's not about how and if God responds, it's about humbly coming before the Father. We pray to the father to help align our will with His.

So what happens when we align our will with His? A few weeks ago, Donna Mroz, from OC-United, revealed that answer to our students. Two years ago, Donna shared with our group that she had an idea for a domestic abuse support group. She stated that many women in abuse situations won't attend a support group because they don't feel safe. She had an idea to hold the support groups at a police station. Donna shared, "How much safer would a woman feel if their abuser would have to show up at a police station to confront them?" Donna told our group that she was in the initial stages of proposing this idea to the Fullerton Police Department.

I told her that we should pray for this idea to happen. We should walk down to Police station and hold hands and prayer for this to be God's will. I'll never forget the look on Donna's face as our students excitedly jumped up from their seats and hurried out the door to go pray for her and her idea. 10 minutes later we gathered on the sidewalk and, one by one, each of the students prayed for Donna and for the support group.

Fast forward two years later as Donna is sharing about the success of her Fullerton support group. She tells the students that they are a few weeks away from launching their 2nd location at the Anaheim Police Department. She told us that she feels that this is her legacy, that God is calling her to start an abuse support group at every police department in Orange County. She then reminded us all of that moment two years ago, maybe something we had forgotten about. Donna told our students that this was their legacy too, that they were a part of this ministry to victims of abuse. Because of their prayer she knew this is what God wanted her to do.

It's true that we never know how God will respond to our prayers. Yet, we can confidentially pray for His will to be our will. When we do that we are participating in His good works that He has been planning all along.

**PPC Youth Praying in front of the
Fullerton PD August 2016**



OUR NEW APP IS HERE!



[GET THE PLACENTIA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH APP](#)

Click the above link on a mobile device or smartphone to download the app

If you've attended Placentia Presbyterian Church for any period of time, then you know that our mission is to Love People to LIFE: Relational. Relevant. Bold. That's how we're able to make such a lasting impact in our community, and it's the driving force behind everything we do.

The church isn't a building it's the people! We want to make sure that everyone can experience PPC whenever and wherever. Our app changes the way we connect with both people visiting for the first time, and for those who call PPC home. Whether it's registering for upcoming events, checking out the latest podcast, or following along with the message using our custom sermon notes, you will now be able to stay connected 24/7.

The new app is designed to be friendly to regular attenders and guests, not just for members. The calendar will **not** display events that are for PPC members only such as committee meetings. The Elexio app will remain as a PPC member directory and internal master calendar.

All of our online giving will be on the new PPC app.

Download the app today and start connecting with PPC! Click on the link above or go to the App store on your iPhone or the Google Play store on your Android phone. Search for "Placentia Presbyterian Church" .



The ministry of the Nitro coffee bar is twofold:

1. Provides a destination for visitors (with their "I'M NEW" card) to connect with members of our church on a personal basis guiding them to involvement and possible future membership in our congregation.
2. Any proceeds of the Nitro Bar are donated to the Youth Scholarship Fund of PPC to allow children and youth to attend church activities they cannot afford on their own.

The PPC Nitro Bar partners with and serves Solid City City Coffee. Solid City Coffee is a social enterprise ministry of Solidarity that uses quality, ethically sourced, direct trade specialty coffee.

Solid City works in conjunction with the Solid Enterprise team of Solidarity to provide job training and discipleship for youth right here in our neighborhood. We believe that through business urban youth can be empowered to bring renewal to their communities.

The PPC Nitro Bar supports this mission of Solidarity by purchasing and serving Solid City Coffee.

The proceeds of the Nitro Bar are used to fund leadership training for youth and scholarships for children and youth to participate in various PPC activities and camps they cannot afford on their own.

Please support this ministry and enjoy a refreshing, silky, creamy, stout-like Nitro Cold Brew coffee or tea with the knowledge that you are supporting local at-risk children and youth.







SCIENCE MIKE IS COMING TO PPC!

Mike McHargue (better known as Science Mike) is an author(*Finding God In The Waves*, Convergent, 2016), podcaster, and speaker focused on the science behind spiritual experiences. Mike lost his faith via atheism as an adult, but rediscovered God in cosmology and neuroscience—a journey that lead to his life's mission: helping people reconcile their faith with modern science.

Mike cofounded *The Liturgists* with Michael Gungor of the award winning band *Gungor*. Together they assembled a diverse cast of contributors including Rob Bell, Shauna Niequist, Amena Brown, Rachel Held Evans, Pete Holmes, Sleeping At Last, and All Sons and Daughters. Part of *The Liturgists'* work is a curiously popular podcast, *The Liturgists Podcast*. By examining topics through the lenses of science, art, and faith with a commitment to open, honest discussions, *The Liturgists Podcast* has attracted hundreds of thousands of listeners of remarkable diversity including not only a broad swath of Christianity, but also the religiously unaffiliated—including agnostics and atheists.

Mike also hosts a weekly questions-and-answer podcast called *Ask Science Mike* with over 250,000 monthly downloads. *Ask Science Mike* is a safe space for people to share questions they've always been afraid to ask about science, faith, and life. Mike also blogs on his website, in addition to writing for RELEVANT, Don Miller's Storyline, and BioLogos.

Mike loves sharing ideas in person, and is an in-demand speaker at conferences, churches, and colleges. He's recently spoken to sold-out crowds in New York about the science of addiction, explained the science of storytelling at *Storyline* in Chicago, and shown people how Christianity can embrace the modern world at *Belong* in London.

Mike lives in in La Cresenta, CA with his wife Jenny and two beautiful daughters.



849 N. Bradford Ave.

Placentia, Ca 92870

714 528-1438

www.ppc.church