

GLA Newsletter

June/July 2013

Better together in mission.

Send stories to glaclerkss@gmail.com for future issues

THE STORY of BLESSING: (by Lon Wagner) Over the past year, Bethany CRC (Bellflower) has gone on a journey together. It was a journey called **THE STORY**. This 31 week, all-church study began in Genesis last September and finished in Revelation in May. Our study contained three components: a sermon series on Sunday mornings, weekly readings that congregation members completed at home, and discussion groups that met weekly to take the learning a little deeper.

Bethany joins together for all-church-studies each year, but we've never done one of this length. **THE STORY** was a blessing. We find all-church-studies to be a unifying, energizing experience for our congregation as we are all learning about and talking about the same thing. This year, we immersed ourselves in God's Word...that's what **THE STORY** is: it is the NIV and tells the story of God and His people as one seamless story.

Often people will decide to read through the Bible in a year...which is a good thing. But sometimes people can get bogged down in some of the difficult parts of scripture. Sometimes people lose perspective of the overarching theme of God's Word. **THE STORY** kept us focused on God's Upper Story and how our Lower Stories fit into it.

In our Lower Stories, we have jobs, pay bills, raise our kids, work through conflicts, etc. God cares about our Lower Story lives and He meets us in each of our Lower Stories and helps us. But He has a higher agenda than just our survival and comfort. As we view the Bible from God's Upper Story perspective, we see that God has been up to something amazing from the beginning of time. God's purpose is to "do life" with people. We were made to live in relationship with Him. God invites us to live life from an Upper Story perspective and place His will, His grand plan for the universe, first. Reading God's Word from this perspective, through this lens, has been encouraging for Bethany members. We have been reminded of God's great love and how our lives have so much more meaning than we can ever imagine. We highly recommend **THE STORY**.

MISSION TOOL BOX: THE STORY resources can be found at <http://www.thestorycd.com/products/>. The podcast sermons on THE STORY from Bethany CRC www.bethanycrc.org/taxonomy/term/1?page=10

CLASSIS GLA PRAYER MEETING is on the first Saturday of the month in God's Grace's building at First CRC of Bellflower from 8 - 10 AM. Everyone is welcome to come and pray and/or to be prayed for. Prayer requests can be sent to Annette Mendez or Diony Aguhob at (worldtrippn@yahoo.com) or (daguhob@yahoo.com). The next prayer meeting is August 4

CALIFORNIA CRC HISPANIC SEMINARY: Two pressing needs in the Hispanic CRCs in California are instruction in the basic Christian teachings and leadership development. To meet those two needs Classis GLA and Cal South started the California Theological Seminary (CTS) in September 2012. CTS is an extension of the Miami International Theological Seminary which grants the diplomas. The vision is to provide theological education at the highest level for Hispanic pastors and leaders at affordable prices. Our hope is that this training will bring gospel health to many CRCs.

In the past we recruited pastors from other denominations who came with pre-formed theological ideas and did not understand our Reformed identity. Through the CTS we are positively influencing students' thinking. We are forming them to think scripturally, to connect with our CRC identity, and provide them with a solid education that helps them to fulfill their mission to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Twelve GLA students finished the first CTS course on the Spiritual Disciplines last year. To date we have completed three courses: Introduction to the Old Testament, Introduction to the New Testament, and the course of Biblical Exegesis. We are pleased to see that CTS has changed the personal lives and theological thinking of the students. Although a challenge, students who only had a second grade formal education now have the same capacity to lead as students with higher levels of education.

CTS values academic excellence and is committed to developing students' gifts. We are preparing the next generation of Latino leaders and church planters who are strongly committed to the Lord and the kingdom. One of the requirements to get a CTS diploma is a one-year internship in our churches. Internships give the students practical experience, help them form lasting relationships, and connect them to a church planting support network. CTS is excited about equipping new Hispanic church planters, youth leaders, elders, deacons, Sunday School teachers for our churches in Southern California. "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Mt 9:37, 38) Harvest workers make the difference. They must be recruited, mentored, equipped, and sent. Please pray for us...! (by Mirtha Villafane)

CENT MEETING: Aug 20, 6 PM

LDT Meeting: Aug 27, 11 AM

CLT MEETING: Sept 12, 11:30 AM ministry Center

SPECIAL GLA CLASSIS MEETING: Sept 19

REGULAR GLA CLASSIS MEETING: Oct 22

