

PASTOR'S PENSÉES



Front and Center by Cole Huffman

In one of his books, Gregory Thornbury says he once told a European audience that evangelicalism is a suicide death cult. We criticize ourselves to death, he meant. It's an off-the-wall way of putting it, but Thornbury was attempting to emphasize a recurring crisis in evangelical identity.

While many in evangelical churches are saying they don't know who we are anymore, most don't know who we were to begin with. Evangelicalism, interdenominational in makeup, began as a reform movement, emphasizing spiritual renewal leading to cultural renewal.

Some feel the term evangelical is now past its shelf life. It should be put out to pasture, or put down like an old incontinent dog. For those who feel this way, the term no longer has spiritual credibility or intellectual respectability. It has been too commandeered by civil religion and culture warring.

Classically considered, an *evangelical* is someone who magnifies the gospel of Jesus Christ (*evangel* = *gospel*) in four ways, primarily: by identifying the Bible as the highest religious authority, by owning the necessity of the new birth through Jesus' atoning work on the cross, by cultivating spiritual formation through prayer and Bible study (spiritual disciplines) in discipleship, and by evangelizing through missions.

We can quibble over details, but those four components are at the core of evangelical identity. The movement exists on a continuum, however. In the center are the four key components. At each end of the continuum is progressivism (moving left) and fundamentalism (moving right). Evangelicalism has always allowed some latitude for progressive and fundamentalist lean-

ings, but the further one goes left or right from center, the less evangelical he is.

If I take Jesus' friendship with sinners to mean sin can be reinterpreted, for instance, that's a progressive impulse. I may persuade myself that I'm just trying to love people alienated from Jesus by His church. But I'm moving left, away from center, on the continuum if I forsake biblical authority. I will sail off the continuum eventually. *Here be dragons.*

The right end of the continuum tends to draw those always on guard against leftward drift. Historian George Marsden once defined a fundamentalist as an evangelical who is angry about something. The further right one goes into fundamentalism, the more reactionary and separatist the impulse, and the more isolating the results. "Fightin' Fundies" often take a remnant mentality, canonize some scruple, *shibboleth* it (see Judges 12), and become almost impossible to fellowship with peaceably.

Proverbs 4:27 lays down a median evangelical principle: "Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil." Ethics, in this consideration, is not about turning wooden or engaging in your-evil-is-worse-than-mine one-upmanship. It's about becoming center-lane wise. At its best, evangelicalism gives its adherents a doctrinal, ethical, and relational skill-set by which to navigate a complicated world.

Some think a centrist—or any appeal to the center—inhabits a mushy middle ground where convictions go to die. But evangelicals have traditionally appreciated those who unashamedly proclaim the gospel from the center. We don't believe we reach people by secession or accommodation.

Warren Wiersbe wrote something in his autobiography that has helped me navigate the complicatedness of being evangelical: "I see my convictions, not as walls to isolate me from others, but as bridges to help me reach out to others. It's not the strong but the weak who draw back in fear and refuse to love people with whom they disagree."

Wiersbe went on to write that God had evidently blessed people he disagreed with. He said he never knowingly shared a conference platform with anyone who denied Jesus' atoning work on the cross (due to evangelical core conviction), but he learned to apply Augustine's dictum about unity in essentials, freedom in non-essentials, and love in all things.



That feels like a hill to climb now. Evangelicals are polarized and at times self-defeating. We've made our way in the world—the world knows who we are—but the world has made its way in us too.

Our movement could use renewal. Evangelicals have always been self-correcting. The introspection that requires can turn morbid and egocentric (the suicide death cult). But it can also display a softness to God that drives us to center ourselves again by the Word, the cross, prayer, and mission, with humility.

When the center holds, *evangelical* is still a good and useful name to go by. I don't want to lose it. I want to see it redeemed.

It's my understanding John Calvin said somewhere that as long as Scripture was read at Catholic mass, the Holy Spirit could promote the Lord and His grace among them. I'm heartened to think on that as an evangelical who preaches every Sunday in the Christ-haunted South. The church needs the gospel as much as the world.

Even after evangelicalism's pallbearers have filed into the room, there is reason to be hopeful. If something dies in Christ, it doesn't get rehabilitation. It gets to practice resurrection.

CHURCH-WIDE

Welcoming New Staff

Ken Boer

will join our staff as our new Pastor of Worship starting Sunday, September 9. He is married to Rachael and they have four children: Carter (10), Amelia (8), Luke (7), and Eliza (3). The Boers will make the transition from Maryland to Memphis this month.



Jake Ferwerda

is our new Junior High (*Impact*) Director starting Sunday, July 29. Jake is married to Emilee and they have a daughter, Bailey, who is nearly 18 months. They are a coast-to-coast family, as Jake grew up near Boston, MA, while Emilee grew up in northern California. The Ferwerdas will be moving to Memphis from the Boston area, where Jake served as the youth pastor at a local church.



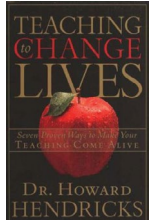
Stacey Pritchard

is our new Student Ministries Administrative Assistant. She is married to David and they have three children: Sara Beth (20), Jake (18), and Katie (14). Stacey has attended First Evan since middle school, though she spent seven years in Starkville, MS. Stacey is the daughter of Jim and Carol Newman.



"How to Teach" Elective led by Pastor Cole Huffman

Wednesdays, September 19 and 26, October 3 and 10, 6:30-7:45 p.m., C210



This is a 4-week course for anyone teaching now or who would like to teach at First Evan. You will need to purchase the book, *Teaching to Change Lives: Seven Proven Ways to Make Your Teaching Come Alive* by Dr. Howard Hendricks, prior to the first meeting. Sign up at www.firstevan.org/teaching.

WOMEN

All Women's Event

Sunday, August 5
9:30 a.m., Gym

Crickett will share a short devotion and challenge for the coming year as we eat, fellowship, and worship together. For those in their seats by 9:40 a.m., we will have drawings for an opportunity to choose your Christmas Dinner table before the ticket sales and for \$100 towards a scholarship or spa treatment at the *Girls' Getaway!*

Girls' Getaway "Anchored in the Storms of Life"

Friday-Sunday, September 28-30
Marriott Shoals and Spa, Florence, AL

Let's get away for the weekend to a beautiful, relaxing resort and have some sweet times of fellowship and spiritual refreshment as Kerry Scheer (back by popular demand) shares from God's Word. Register at www.firstevan.org/womens-retreat.

Mentoring Moms

Tuesday, September 18, 7:00 p.m.

All young moms and moms-to-be are invited to hear from guest speaker Carolyn Winn, and be encouraged as you seek to raise your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Location to be determined.



MEN

Men's Fish Fry

Tuesday, August 14
6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Speaker: Shad Berry

"More For You, Not From You"

Join us for an evening of fish, food, and fellowship in honor of Larry Peebles and Larry Pegrim. For tickets (\$7/person; \$50/table), contact Shawn Wilkins at 831-5824 or email men@firstevan.org.



"Deuteronomy and Joshua" Bible Study led by Buddy Jones

Mondays, September 10-December 3, 2018 and February 4-April 29, 2019
6:30-8:00 p.m., F-Hall

The Old Testament books of Deuteronomy and Joshua recount how God completed His great work of redemption for the nation of Israel. In Deuteronomy, God gives the nation a final message about being His covenant people. In Joshua, God brings His people into the Promised Land and gives them rest from their enemies. Registration and information: www.firstevan.org/mens-bible-studies.

WORSHIP

Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 9

Ron Man remains our Missionary in Residence and will lead this year's services. **Rehearsals will begin on Sunday, October 21, at 12:15 p.m., beginning with lunch, followed by a rehearsal from 1:15-3:15 p.m. in the Sanctuary.** Contact Jan Spurlin at 682-8452.

FAMILY

Promotion Sunday

Sunday, August 12

All students (birth-12th grade) will be promoted during the Sunday School hour. *FEC Kids* will meet their Sunday School teachers and enjoy snow cones.



Child Dedication

Sunday, September 23

Register by Monday, September 10 at www.firstevan.org/childdedication.

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Moving Up Day

Sunday, August 12, 12:15-2:30 p.m.

Impact (rising 6th-8th grade) and *Common Ground* (rising 9th-12th grade) students are invited to a Sunday School Celebration, then after church, for lunch and fun in the *Impact* (E226) and *Common Ground* (E202) Rooms.

CARE Details at www.firstevan.org/care.

He Cares (Ministry to the homebound)

Thursday, August 30

9:30 a.m., Soltau Center

Contact Rhonda Finrock at 683-0757 or rhondafinrock@comcast.net.

ADULTS

LLL Movie Day

Monday, August 20

1:00 p.m., Chapel

Join us for popcorn, drinks, and *Courageous*.



"A Roaring Good Time...And All That Jazz" Senior Luncheon

Saturday, September 8

11:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall

Music from the 30s and 40s. RSVP by Tuesday, September 4 to Susanna Winter at dswinter@bellsouth.net or 487-2819.



Midweek www.firstevan.org/midweek

Wednesday Night Dinner and Activities for All Ages!
September 12–November 14*

Childcare: www.firstevan.org/midweek-childcare

Don't limit your connection with First Evan to Sunday only! Join us for *Midweek* to enrich your spiritual walk and deepen your relationships with others in our fellowship.

There's something for everyone on Wednesday nights. It starts with dinner from 5:00–6:00 p.m., where you can choose from a hot meal or a lighter soup and salad. Drop off the kids (6 weeks through 5th grade) at 6:00 p.m. and you'll have no problem making it to any of the other offerings by 6:15 p.m. Most activities end at 7:30 p.m. with a few lasting until 8:00 p.m., but all the kids are cared for until 8:00 p.m. if needed.

Wednesday Night Dinner*
5:00–6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
\$6/person | \$3/child | \$30 max for families (\$7/take-home meal) Visitors and guests are always welcome and reservations are not necessary. **You can find the weekly menu at www.firstevan.org/midweek-menu.**

FOR KIDS
6:00–7:30/7:45 p.m.**

Awana*
Age 3 (by March 12; must be potty-trained) through 5th grade
Cost: \$35 per child/year



(additional fees for shirts, vests, and extra books)
Cubbies 3-5 year olds, C-Wing **Sparks** K-2nd grade, Gym **Truth & Training** 3rd-5th Grade, Gym**
Build a firm foundation on God's Word in your children's lives through our Awana program on Wednesday night. Children will participate in handbook time (Scripture memorization and recitation), council time (songs, Bible stories), and game time. **Register now at www.firstevan.org/awana.** For more information, email children@firstevan.org.

CRASH! A First Evan Trash Can Band*
3rd through 5th grade, A111
Cost: \$40/child



Under the direction of Mrs. Doris Shifflette, this unique percussion ensemble will learn and perform God's Word in engaging rhythms by playing on aluminum/rubber trash cans and various "crashing" items. The repertoire will model the Orff Schulwerk method of utilizing creative rondos to form organized rhythmical compositions. The curriculum will focus strictly on God's Word. **Register now at www.firstevan.org/crash.** For more information, email children@firstevan.org.

FOR STUDENTS
6:15–7:45 p.m.

Impact*
Middle School, E226



Common Ground*
High School, E202



August 22–December 5
An opportunity is provided for students to grow in their relationships with Jesus, their friends, and their adult small group leaders. Each week we meet to connect with one another through worship, teaching, and small group time. Small groups are divided by grade and gender to discuss the message from the evening, build friendships, and pray together. Afterwards, we eat great snacks and hang out. **For more information, email students@firstevan.org.**

FOR ADULTS
6:15–7:30/8:00 p.m.

Financial Peace University (FPU)*
with Trent Curry, A221



A 9-week video curriculum, taught by financial expert Dave Ramsey. *FPU* is highly entertaining for everyone, with a unique combination of humor, informative financial advice, and Biblical messages. **Register now at www.firstevan.org/fpu.**

Prayer Meeting D114
A Prayer Guide is provided each week to assist in praying for our church, ministries, sick, bereaved, country, missionaries, and military. **For more information, contact Chuck Downs at cadowns@bellsouth.net.**

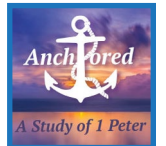
Worship Choir/Band Sanctuary
Come be a part of this intergenerational group that loves to lift praises to the Lord in song and to support the congregation in its worship. *The Worship Choir* also prepares the annual Palm Sunday and *A Christmas Festival of Lessons and Carols* services with full symphony orchestra. **For more information, contact Jan Spurlin at jspurlin@firstevan.org.**

Equipping Elective* A211
"Second Nature: How to Live on Mission in the Current of Culture"
with Andrew Beach and Jim Pendleton
September 12–October 24

We are excited to explore three questions together in this 6-week series. First, what is God's mission? Second, what obstacles are in my way? Third, how can I intentionally steer the most common conversations toward the gospel? **For registration and more information, visit www.firstevan.org/equippingelective.**



Heart to Heart Women's Bible Study*
"Anchored: A Study of 1 Peter" written by Crickett Keeth; Cost: \$7



September 11/12–November 13/14
Tuesday mornings, 9:30–11:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall
Wednesday evenings, 6:15–8:00 p.m., Chapel

Join us for an 8-week study of 1 Peter as we look at how we can be anchored in Christ regardless of what is going on in life. **For registration and more information, visit www.firstevan.org/h2h.**

Men's Group* A202
"Knowing God and Making Him Known" with Seth Stevens



This year our study will focus on the practical pursuit of knowing God and making Him known. Our format as we pursue this goal will be to have a lesson, followed by table group discussion and prayer. **For registration and more information, visit www.firstevan.org/mens-midweek.**

***Does not meet on Wednesday, October 10 due to Fall Break. Students will not meet Wednesdays, October 10 or November 21. Heart to Heart a.m. will not meet on Tuesday, October 9. Wednesday, October 31 Midweek has been moved to Tuesday, October 30.**

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

*"To glorify Jesus Christ and magnify
His gospel in all of life until He comes."*

Sunday School Classes
9:30–10:30 a.m.

Fellowship 10:30 a.m.

Morning Worship Service
10:45 a.m.–noon
Sanctuary

Evening Worship Service
6:00–7:00 p.m.
Chapel

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CALENDAR

August

- 1 *Common Ground Oxford Day Trip* 11:00 a.m.–5:45 p.m., Meet in Gym Lobby
Impact Pool Party with Jake Ferwerda 6:00–8:00 p.m., The Huffman Home (3406 Beaver Run Dr.)
- 5 *All Women's Event* 9:30–10:30 a.m., Gym | **Communion**
- 8 *Missions Lunch: Czech Republic Team* 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
Common Ground Prayer Night 6:00–8:00 p.m., The Berry Home (4649 Flamingo Rd.)
- 12 *Promotion Sunday* 9:30–10:30 a.m.
Moving Up Day Activities 12:15–2:30 p.m., *Impact* (E226) and *Common Ground* (E202)
FEC Kids Mandatory Teacher Training 12:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- 13 Deacon/Elder Meeting
- 19 *Leadership Meeting* 4:15–5:15 p.m., Multi-Purpose Room (E125)
World Prayer Focus 5:30–7:00 p.m., Chapel
- 20 *Mother's Day Out Fall Term Begins | LLL Movie Day* 1:00 p.m., Chapel
- 22 *Student Ministries Wednesday Nights Begin* 6:15–7:45 p.m., *Impact* (E226) and *Common Ground* (E202)
- 27 *Caregivers* 7:00 p.m., Chapel
- 30 *He Cares* 9:30 a.m., Soltau Center

September

- 1, 3 **Church Closed for Labor Day**
- 8 "A Roaring Good Time...And All That Jazz" Senior Luncheon 11:00 a.m., Fellowship Hall
- 9 Communion | *Missions Lunch: David and Meg Robbins* 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- 10 *ACT II Widows Fellowship* 10:30 a.m., Location TBD
Men's Monday Night Bible Study Begins 6:30–8:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- 11 *Heart to Heart Women's Bible Study Begins* Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. | Wednesdays 6:15 p.m.
- 12 **Midweek Begins** Wednesdays, 5:00 p.m.
- 14–16 *Common Ground Run the River*
- 16 *Memphis Ministry Lunch: Advance Memphis* 12:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall
- 17 *LLL Movie Day* 1:00 p.m., Chapel
- 18 *Mentoring Moms* 7:00 p.m., Location TBD
- 19 "How to Teach" Elective Begins 6:30–7:45 p.m., C210
- 21–22 Council Retreat
- 23 Child Dedication | Church Picnic 12:15 p.m., East Lawn
- 27 *He Cares* 9:30 a.m., Soltau Center
- 28–30 *Girls' Getaway "Anchored in the Storms of Life"* Marriott Shoals and Spa, Florence, AL