

DSC, State of the Communion: 2011

3 Part Blog Post Series

In a series of three posts we will publish several highlights from 2010 written by members of our staff, to remind ourselves of God's greatness toward us, and Christ's faithfulness to build his church. This won't be comprehensive, but will highlight some of those things that took place that were unique to last year. – *Trent Hunter*

State of the Communion: 2011, Part 1

Biblical Counseling, Tim Bradley

Much of the year was business as usual. There were the highs and lows of the counseling ministry, children hearing about the greatness of our God and participating in the biblical mission by sending toothbrushes and fluoride treatments to Guatemala, and going to the rez for Christmas Store, a parenting seminar, and the completion of the first year of marriage ministry classes. Again, this was business as usual, but God was faithful to work through the ordinary to display His glory by saving some, and sanctifying many.

God was also faithful to display His glory by bringing over 250 children, 100 volunteers and many families from DSC, the Vista del Norte neighborhood, and the community at large to VBS. This is always a highlight of my year and for many others. We work hard, have a blast, herald the gospel of Jesus Christ, give DSC a facelift for a week, brought the Arctic and Popsicle the Penguin to the desert in July, and grew more in love with Jesus and kids.

One of the highlights of VBS 2010 happened on Friday during family night, undetected, and in the quiet recess of the auditorium. Our God was performing a miracle in the heart of a 21 year old visitor, and God and this young man were the only ones who knew what was happening. The first we heard of it was when this 21 year olds mother came into the church office one October afternoon and shared with me the story of her years of prayer for her son's soul being answered at VBS. The woman shared that she lived out of state, was in Albuquerque visiting family, and that she and her son came to family night with their relatives. She had been praying for her son's salvation for years, and was growing weary of his utter disinterest in the Lord. She testified that her son sat through the entire family night program, but that he seemed totally disinterested and appeared to be texting with his phone throughout the evening. She was frustrated, but she also expected this from him.

Unbeknownst to her, her son was listening, the Lord was changing her son's heart from stone to flesh, rescuing him by His grace, and answering her years of prayer. A couple weeks after VBS her son shared with her what had happened, began going to church, and proclaimed his love for Jesus. Her heart was overjoyed, and she was compelled to encourage us and proclaim God's goodness in saving her son. She was in and out that afternoon in October, and we don't even know the young man's name, but we praise our merciful and loving Father for displaying His glory in and through VBS and in the life of a 21 year old saint. Soli Deo Gloria!!!

Parent/Student Ministry, Greg Schneeberger

I'd like to share three encouraging anecdotes:

First, our High School leadership team is growing, and our youth band has improved tremendously. As a result of our Sunday meetings (835am), more HS students are actually going to church than ever. These students are like a mini Community Group for me. I get to disciple them in a hands-on way. Several of our young men have expressed a desire to pursue ministry.

Second, Mid-High nights were great this last year, especially our Reformation Day Party and our Christmas party. We had lots of students and parents show up for a great time together as a paradox family.

Finally, one key area of growth has been partnership with other churches. We did camp this summer with Heights Cumberland, and just returned from a winter retreat with four other churches. God is building some cool unity among the body in Albuquerque.

Music, Drew Hodge

Soon after starting the job in April I had the vision to do a "night of worship" concert. After discussing the idea with some of my team members we came up with the idea of a concert with a live recording. So we started working, and writing. We wrote some new worship tunes, and deciding on the songs we thought best for the worship concert and the live CD. In August we started meeting and going over details for the night and nailed down the final list of songs for the record. September was full of band rehearsals. The night itself was a sweet time of worship through song and Scripture. After the concert we got right to work on the record: editing, mixing, mastering, and preparing artwork. We were able to meet our Christmas deadline. We have been blessed by hearing what God is doing through the album. Our hope is to make a record every year.

State of the Communion: 2011, Part 2

Redemption Church, Rio Rancho, Carlos Griego

This past year Desert Springs became a church that plants churches. The first of these churches to be planted will be in Rio Rancho, NM. This young church plant has in some ways already formed an identity of its own, if not at least a name, Redemption Church. The vision of Redemption is to be a church that brings the message of redemption through Jesus Christ to the people of Rio Rancho, as well as to seek to display the work of redemption in all parts of life, such as work, marriage, and parenting to name a few. Redemption is also in the candidate phase of being part of the Acts 29 church-planting network. This network includes like minded pastors who seek to see lives transformed by Jesus and continue to plant churches. Redemption will be led by the lead pastor, Carlos Griego, who has been on staff at DSC for 3 1/2 years serving as the minister over The Well, the young adult ministry, as well as the Men's ministry. Over the next year we are praying for 40 adults to become part of Redemption's core group ready to establish this new church early in 2012.

Financial, Ron Giese

As we ended the month of January, we closed out the first third (4 months) of our fiscal year with a deep sense of gratitude. You may have noticed from the bulletin that in late fall we were, at times, as much as \$20K in the red in anticipated giving (which is what our budget is based on). December ended up, thankfully, being a very good, "catch-up" month. This allowed us to start January at an "even" status.

Running a church financially is not fundamentally different than running a home or apartment. When we take in less through giving, we cut back on spending. But we do not cut back in areas like missions. We've also had a lot of help in the past six months from people donating time, talents, equipment, and even monies in designated giving above and beyond their regular giving.

Christmas Store, Carolyn Rush

Your generosity and love for those in need showed Christ's love to many through our many annual Christmas stores. Over 3,000 items were collected this year for the six Christmas stores that were set up here in Albuquerque and the Navajo reservation. Over 200 of you served by coming by the church to sort gifts, or by attending a Christmas Store. The Christmas store has so many purposes, it provides gifts for parents to get the joy of giving at Christmas to their children, and it allows us to share the love of Christ through giving because of His great grace and giving to us. When asked by one woman that was going through the store, "Why do you do this for us? I would not have had anything to give to my children if it were not for your generosity," I was able to say because of God's great love for us, He gave us the gift of His son to bear the wrath for our sins, we in turn are to show love to others. The Christmas Store serves as a launching pad to be on mission throughout the year in our community and beyond. Each of these stores has allowed us the opportunity to continue to serve throughout the year in some capacity.

Several years ago after attending a Christmas Store at Steamboat on the Navajo Reservation, Astraea and Leonard Duran of DCS approached the church and asked if they could help start a VBS out at Steamboat by offering to bring supplies, resources and people to train the people there at Bethel Baptist to do VBS. We have now gone to assist and equip them and in the next few years we believe we can move on to start a VBS at Lukachukai and equip them in starting a VBS. The church in Steamboat is now seeing new families coming to church that would not have stepped into the church in the past. Being on mission to share the good news of the gospel must be done daily with our own neighbors and co-workers and unsaved families, as well as further into our community and beyond. The Christmas Store allows us the joy to partner with other believers in sharing the love of Christ.

State of the Communion: 2011, Part 3

Local and Global Missions, Clint Moore

Becoming a church planting church

- In 2010 we rolled out our vision, mission, and really, calling to become a church that plants churches that plants churches. This included two messages at Missions Emphasis Week. One about counting the costs of becoming a church planting church and one about the purpose behind church planting locally. This will be a costly endeavor for us as a church that will require a continued paradigm shift toward radical sacrifice, prayer, and generosity as we send families out to live among the nations and our neighbors. We rolled out our goal of \$2.5 Million for church planting over 10 years through our \$1/day in 2010 + prayerfully increasing by \$1/day in future years. 133 folks were committed to this by the end of 2010, and many of those were committed to more than \$1/day in 2010 already.
- We formally announced Carlos as the first local church planter to be sent out from DSC. He is continuing to gather steam when it comes to pastoral training through Re:Train and Acts 29.
- We have already received \$27,000 in giving toward church planting at DSC, and it is only January. God is indeed providing for His purposes.

SNAP – Sunrise North Africa Partnership

- Applied for and received a \$75,000 matching grant for church planting among the unreached from SKI (Strategic Kingdom Initiatives) to be used for training and launching funds for our team in the coming years.
- Invested another \$6000 (\$500/month) in evangelism, discipleship and leadership development through Arab World Ministries Media outreach and their Maarifa Website, as well as their PALM (Preparing Arab Leaders for Ministry) program. Planning the same for 2011 as we continue to invest in the future ministry of our church planters.
- Hosted AWM couple that was expelled from North Africa who helped paint a picture for us of the environment we are sending out team into, as well as challenged us to stay the course, though North Africa is a moving target.
- We formally recognized our SNAP families as the first candidates to be trained for going to North Africa as church planters with AWM/Pioneers. We are continuing to send them through various theological and ministry trainings in the next couple of years, and, Lord willing, send them out in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Each family is also undergoing close evaluation by all of the current elders for relationship health, preparedness for planting churches, parenting, marriage, and a host of other categories. We will, Lord willing, submit them as candidates for church planting with Pioneers toward the end of 2011.
- People in the DSC body have begun to rally around these families to support them financially, logistically, relationally, and prayerfully.

Guatemala

- After more than 30 years of translation work by Carol and Rodrigo Barrera, the Rabinal Achi New Testament was finished in the early fall of 2009. And the audio recording was finished by Hosanna just a few months after that in early 2010.

- Several elders and missions leaders traveled to Achi land in January 2010 in order to help celebrate the NT being finished, and to help establish a yearly pastoral training time for Achi Pastors pointing them to use God's word as *the* central tool in their ministry.
- We've continued our partnership with Dr. Jacobo Pineda through his ministry of Community Health Evangelism (CHE) by sending 14 people on medical and dental trips in 2010, and 11 on a water project to Guatemala. God raised \$2000 through us to help with water projects in Guatemala during our Sola Aqua month in September. Besides giving monetarily to this project, the entire DSC body has rallied to support the Dental and Medical trips by supplying medicines, medical supplies, and toothbrushes for these mission trips.
- Total DSCer's who went to Guatemala in 2010 ~ 49.
- Working with Barreras and Pinedas on a "What's Next" proposal for doing more Community Health Evangelism, as well as leadership development, and possibly church planting in Guatemala.

Mexico

- Travel to Mexico has been very limited again this year because of the increased and sustained violence in Juarez. Please continue to pray that things will change, and that through this, God will continue to use the church, especially our partner, Las Palmas Church to reach their neighbors for Christ.

Native American Partnership

- A team of 17 from DSC helped lead VBS with our partner church (Bethel Navajo Baptist) in Steamboat Arizona. By the end of the week there were almost 120 students and several adults coming to hear about Jesus and study the Bible.
- We are praying that we will continue to grow in our partnership and potentially provide some theological and pastoral training for Bethel Baptist church, as well as expanding the VBS and construction projects to the Rez in 2011.

Local Mobilization of God's people to be on Mission

- The main thrust for mobilizing God's body on mission has been a push for prayer for, equipping for, and modeling of a missional life. We are fervently asking God that He will move in our leadership (elders, staff, deacons, and community group leaders) to be on mission in all of life, pray that God use them to save souls, and mobilize those they lead to do the same.
- Working with Jay, we have established a monthly SYNC meeting for vision casting, mission realignment, as well as leadership and theological training for Community Group leaders. We are praying that as the vision of missional communities (groups on mission to expand God's kingdom) spreads to the CG leaders, it will spread to their people as well.
- Offering our third offering of the Ambassador Training Series in 2011 – designed to equip God's people to be faithful, competent Ambassadors through discussing the Knowledge, Wisdom, Character, and Tools of an Ambassador for Christ.
- There are currently 26 Community Groups at DSC, and at least 12 of them started this year either out of nothing or splitting off of an existing group. Nine of the 26 groups are at "capacity" now. And several of those are raising up new leaders within and looking to split in order to make room not just for more DSC folks, but, Lord willing, as we go out on mission, for new converts that we are asking God to provide as He wills.

Adoption Ministry

- Because of DSC donors, the Abba fund is nearing \$50,000 in interest free loan money available for families to borrow to help with adoptions (loans are limited to \$5k for now).
- 5 Families completed adoptions of 8 children at DSC in 2010. 4 new families began the adoption process in 2010. And 3 families continued the process of adoption in 2010. Several families are being trained or already serving in foster care as well.
- Continued our Bi-monthly fellowship where we come to share stories, struggles, and praises in adoption.
- Held our 2nd annual Adoption Sunday. Trent Hunter called us to love orphans individually and corporately. We seem to be a body uniquely gifted to press into this pocket of hurt and lostness in our city, state, country, and world and we pray God will continue to use us to make disciples through adoption and other orphan care.