

## Pastor Thoughts

Theodicy is the study of the cry, “Why God?!?” C.S. Lewis simply called it, “the problem of pain.”

If God is all-good, then He cannot be all-powerful, for a good God would never allow evil to exist in the world if He had the power to overcome it. Conversely, if God is all-powerful, then He cannot be all-good, for an all-powerful God can overcome all evil - yet evil exists!

While there are answers - good, true, great answers - answers that bring a settled peace, a proper world view, and an increased faith, this column isn't called “pastor's answers,” but “pastor's thoughts,” and my thoughts are engrossed in analogy.

My son fell this week. He tripped and fell on a toy he'd left out. No cut or scrape, just pain. I was with him, in plain view, sitting ten feet away. After the fall, the crying, and the hugging, he looked up at me and said, “Next time, you keep me from getting hurt? Ok?” It was 80 percent genuine request, but 20 percent accusation! He was telling me, “I got hurt and it's your fault for not keeping me from falling.”

I'm told my name, Britt, means “strong” in Swedish. But I am not all-powerful! And I desire only good for my son. However, I fail him in a number of ways - I'm not always good! My son is under no illusions that I'm all-powerful or all-good. Even so, he's got a set of expectations.

If I were to meet those expectations, however, it would cause him more grief in life than such present suffering could ever be worth. To keep him from all harm always, I would have to lock him in a padded cell, feed him liquefied food, and keep anything from him that had any potential for causing him pain. That means a loss of nearly all freedoms, a loss of nearly all choices ... the loss of truly living!

We've been given, as a race, the power of choice that we might truly live! That means we live in a world where consequences, even the consequences that come from the free choices of others, can affect us. Today, we live in a world that is not God's original intention. It has been reshaped, in part, by people's poor choices.

However, God allows the world to go on, and allows us to continue to move about in it, just like I allow my son to move about a living room littered with toys he himself has strewn about - each a potential hazard, each a potential pain. For the price of constraint is too high. Better to teach the child how to handle the hazards and make better choices.

Better to hold the child after the fall.

Pastor Britt

Revelation 21:4: “and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

2010 Evangelical  
Friends Church Southwest

Northern California  
**Serve Day**  
in Sacramento

“Bless the Grid II”

Come prepared to bless and be blessed!

**Saturday, February 20**  
Serve Day 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Banquet 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.

This year’s Serve Day is designed to support Midtown Friends Church, our new church plant located in midtown Sacramento (called “The Grid”), by helping them reach out to the community. Please contact Maria Coburn for all the details.

### **Pingki ... All grown up!**

Some of us who have been around for a while will remember a little 7-year-old girl being introduced to us in 1998 as our new sponsored child from Bangladesh. Each month our different Sunday school classes would draw pictures, write notes and send photos, and most importantly, pray for our sponsored World Vision children.

We would like to re-introduce you to these children in the newsletter each month. This month we will tell you about Pingki. She is still in the program and still attends classes where she hopes to learn skills to become a teacher. She enjoys music, sports and drawing pictures of flowers; we’ve received many beautiful pictures that she has drawn. Her favorite animal is the lion, and she loves roses - what woman doesn’t!

Because of the World Vision Project and our support, she is able to get a quality education and the supplies necessary to do her schoolwork. Volunteers from her community were trained in water, sanitation and hygiene promotion, and they in turn are training the many families in the community. Last year they reached 1,250 families, which means less water-borne diseases and healthier lives.

The community also has several common gardens in which they produce a variety of vegetables that provide the much-needed vitamins and minerals for a healthy diet. They also have clean water from the new wells installed by World Vision.

In the past we supported our three World Vision children with the donations from our Sunday school offerings. By continuing to support these young ladies, we are helping them to be trained to care for a family and earn money to improve their lives. After we restructured our Sunday school to not include an adult class, donations from our classes did drop. But you can still donate to their support by writing “WV Children” or “Sunday school” on your offering envelope. Also, any children attending Sunday school may still bring offerings each week to class.

### **Men enjoy evening together**

Sixteen men gathered for the Tuesday night “Men’s Fellowship and Meal” on January 19 in the Social Hall. It was a great time of singing to the Lord with a musical theme of “Blessing the Lord.” ... singing, words of inspiration and a time of prayer for one another, which was a very moving experience for

many of us. We ate two big sandwiches from Togo's: a 3-foot beef and a combination 4-foot turkey, cheese, salami and ham along with a large variety of chips and sodas. This may be a precursor to the men meeting on a quarterly basis.

### **Operation Christmas Child Update**

Our generous Walnut Creek Friends family filled 79 shoeboxes! I tracked my shoebox and it was going to the Philippines, so I am thinking that all, or most, of ours would go to the same destination. If anyone else tracked his or her box and got a different location, please let me know and we will get the word out to others. Thank you, everyone, for your support of these children.

### **Multipurpose gifts**

The goal of the Angel Tree ministry is to reconcile prisoners and their children to their Heavenly Father and to each other. Again this year, through Angel Tree, we delivered gifts of clothing, toys and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ to children whose parents are in prison. Our congregation ministered to nine children from three families. A heartfelt "thank you" first of all to everybody who bought and wrapped the gifts; to (the one) who coordinated this effort; and to those who delivered the packages.

### **Dear Walnut Creek Friends Church,**

Thank you for your wonderful food drive donation of 391 pounds of food. Your donations have brightened many faces. We are very appreciative of your support of the Food Bank and those in need in our community! ... We serve 108,000 people each month and distribute over 40,000 pounds of food every working day. The food you collected helps make this possible. Those that receive your donated food, whether they are children, seniors, low-income or just hungry, gratefully appreciate your kindness in thinking of them. Again, THANK YOU for supporting those in need!

### **Safely using our kitchen**

A reminder about the fire safety rules established by the fire department regarding the use of our church kitchen.

#### **Cooking Guidelines for the Church Kitchen**

All food that needs to be fried, browned, or seared on a stovetop should be prepared at home. This includes any type of meat products. The stovetop and oven are to be used only to "warm up" things that are already prepared.

Plug-in appliances such as electric skillets or griddles are acceptable for cooking. Please keep in mind that we are not a commercial kitchen; the Fire Department is concerned about grease fires.

The bottom line: we are a "potluck" type kitchen - prepare it at home and warm it up at our church building.

Our pancake brunches are okay if following the above guidelines.

### **The engine of marriage**

Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. Love is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by the grace which both partners ask and receive from God. On this love the engine of marriage is run; being in love was the explosion that started it.

C.S. Lewis