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Week of Prayer for
NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS
March 4-11, 2007
Change Your World

NATIONAL GOAL: $57,000,000
www.AnnieArmstrong.com

Our Church Goal: $2,007.00

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It was almost ten o’clock and the memorial service for Army Specialist Michael Balley was about to begin. The church was packed to overflowing.

As church pastor, I was responsible to make sure that the ceremony ran smoothly from beginning to end. We had added more chairs to the side rooms; we had fixed a problem with the sound system; we had adjusted the order of service to meet some last minute changes. I looked around and nodded with confidence, “It appears that everything is in order for this ceremony to begin.”

Then I heard Michael’s father speak up from the front pew. “It’s not right,” he said in a loud voice. I was startled. I looked around quickly and asked myself, “What’s not right?” Is Michael’s army portrait misaligned? Maybe he doesn’t like the music being played?” Then he repeated his words, this time with choke in his voice, “It’s just not right!”

Then I understood. It was the tragic death of his 23-year-old son that “was not right”. This was absolutely true. Michael Balley (the son) should never have died before James Balley (the father).

How could even the perfect memorial service ever begin to make it right? Impossible! It’s just not right.

This was my third funeral service of the year. On the first occasion, a woman died in her nineties. On the other occasion, it was a woman in her eighties. These were truly somber events. Grief was real and sorrow was palpable. But nobody shouted out, “It just not right”.

For three years, the drumbeat of death in Iraq had been an abstract painting to me. The death of one young man from the church brought it into sharp focus. I once heard it said that this is the difference between peace and war: “In peacetime, sons bury their fathers. In wartime, fathers bury their sons.” How out of place it all feels. How wrong it is!

In the grief of James Balley, I heard the lament of King David at the death of his own son, who also died in battle,

“And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!” [2 Samuel 18:33]

“It’s not right. It’s just not right!”

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MINISTRIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

**IN LOVING MEMORY**

Viola Jones

On Monday, February 12th, Sister Viola, released her bonds to earth and woke up at the feet of her Savior Jesus Christ. Please remember to keep the family in your prayers.

**Women’s Fellowship**

Saturday, March 24th
12:00 p.m.
Here at the Church

We will be having lunch followed by a shower for the Women’s Crisis Center and we will be making Easter Baskets for the children. We are going to need your help so mark you calendar and plan on coming out and joining us.

**Men’s Breakfast**

Saturday, March 24th
8:30 a.m.

Vasiliki’s Restaurant
Hayward

Across the street from Chabot College

“Mark your calendar… Rain or Shine it’s spring cleaning time and we need your help. For those of you who like to do yard work please bring your own tools and gloves and don’t forget there is always something that you can do to help us out.

First Southern has invited Pastor Dave Robinson to our pulpit on March 25th during the morning service. His innovative presentation often involves sculpting an image in clay while teaching and preaching. Come, listen, see and understand what the prophet Isaiah means when he says “O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.”

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**Valentine Luncheon**

On Sunday, February 11th following the morning worship service we had a valentine luncheon. We had fun getting together and singing, having our pictures taken and of course eating. Here are two pictures of valentine couples.

Thank you to those of you who came and celebrated valentines with us.

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**Color Teams**

Maybe you haven’t got the word yet. Our congregation is “decentralizing” into five deacon teams. Ken Hillard is heading up the Green Team, Al Thorp the Blue Team, Ken Day the Red Team, and King John the Silver Team. At the present time the Gold Team is without a deacon. Every member, attendee, and visitor is now assigned into one of these five color teams. Pastor Chris is heading up a “rainbow team” of the deacons and their wives.

Our desire is to provide hands-on quality care to each and every person that steps through the door at First Southern. If a deacon hasn’t contacted you and you would like one to you can call the church.

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**From the Pastor**

It was a very cold, wet, and dreary day. The sun was just starting to come out and I was feeling very gloomy. I had just gotten out of bed and was still drowsy. I walked over to the window and looked outside. The sky was a dull gray color and the clouds were heavy and dark. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. As I took another breath, I heard a faint voice say, “Pray for our men and women in uniform.”

I opened my eyes and saw a small figure standing outside. It was a young boy, no more than ten years old, holding a small flag. He walked up to me and said, “I’m here to pray for our men and women in uniform.”

I smiled and said, “What a wonderful thing you’re doing. Is there anything I can do to help?”

The boy looked at me and said, “No, I just wanted to tell you that everyone should pray for our men and women in uniform.”

I nodded my head and said, “Thank you for reminding me. I’ll make sure to do so.”

The boy smiled and said, “You’re welcome.”

I watched as he walked away, feeling a sense of warmth and gratitude. I knew that I would never forget what the young boy had said and that I would always remember to pray for our men and women in uniform.