

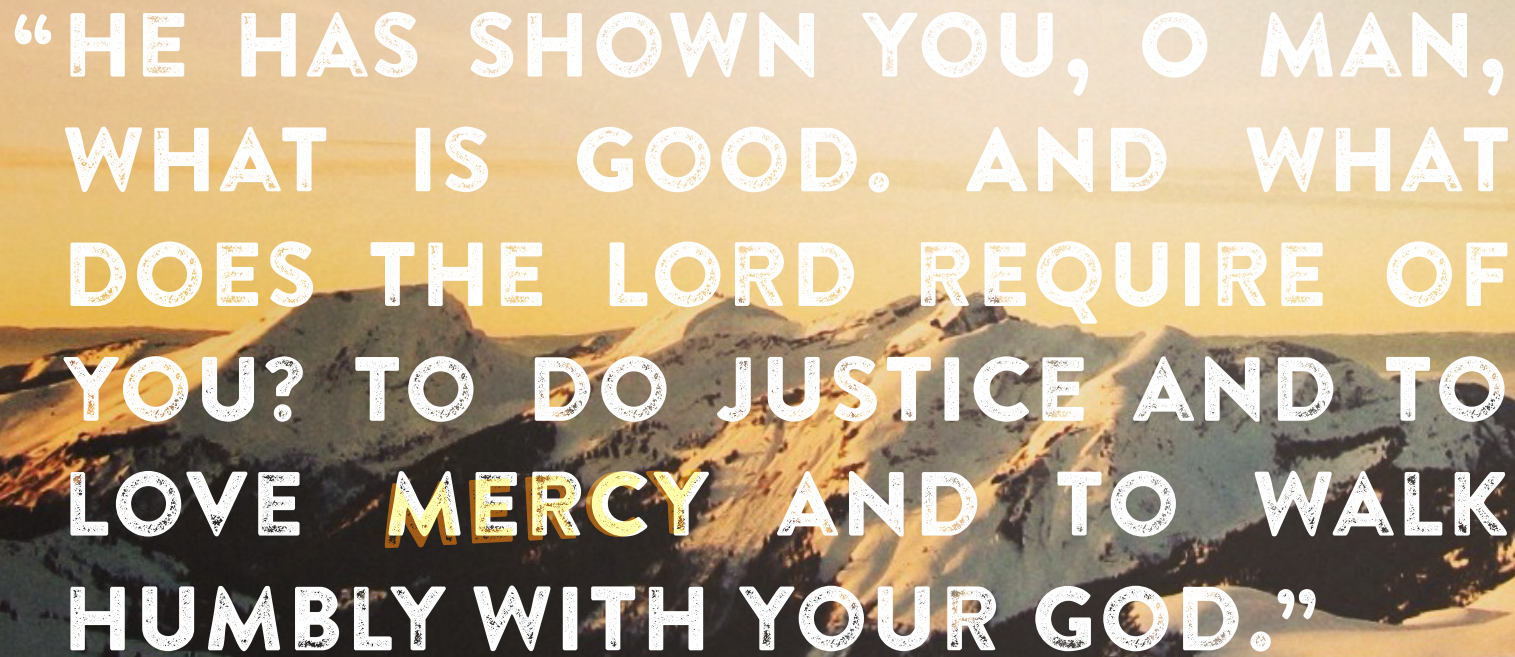
SEASON OF
COURAGE



ISSUE

02

AUG - NOV, 2014



“HE HAS SHOWN YOU, O MAN,
WHAT IS GOOD. AND WHAT
DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF
YOU? TO DO JUSTICE AND TO
LOVE **MERCY** AND TO WALK
HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD.”

Micah 6:8



C O N T E N T S

AUGUST 2014 | ISSUE 02 // COURAGE



BEHIND THE WHITE PICKET FENCE

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*"It takes courage to get
help. It takes courage to
give help."*

- RANDY THOMAS

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OF COURAGE

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HOPE UPDATE

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A person is standing on a rocky cliff, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape. The scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting sunrise or sunset. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark shorts. The cliff is made of large, dark rocks. The background shows a rolling landscape with green fields and distant hills under a hazy sky.

A DECADE of COURAGE

*Celebrating 10 Years
of Recovery at
Mission*

Come to the 10 year anniversary event of Celebrate Recovery at MISSION on Friday, October 24th at 7p.

Visit mission68.org/10years for more information.



It was a normal day for most folks . . . but for Craig, it was different. It was a make or break day. He had been here before – even played the events in his head over and over. He saw himself park the car, take a big breath, put his hand on the door release – then pull. As the door opened, he imagined his life taking a new course.

He wondered, “If they really knew my past, would they still welcome me?”

Every weekend, Craig’s story is played out in our parking lot. The lot may look like simple asphalt and tar, but for many, it is the testing ground of courage.

Over the next few months we will study men and women who passed their test of courage. Our goal is to not only be inspired by those who have preceded us, but to honor those in our midst who demonstrate courage on a daily basis.

The mercy ministries at MISSION are filled with people of great courage. It takes courage to seek help when it is needed. It takes courage to receive help. And often, it takes courage to extend help to others.

It’s fascinating to see in scripture that the basis of courage is found neither in the absence of adversity nor in strength of personal character. It’s rather found in the presence of the Lord. “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

By the way, Craig made it. He got out of the car and walked across his testing ground of courage. As he did, he found God had gone before him. People with similar stories to his welcomed him. He was not alone and his healing began.

What about you? Where’s your testing ground? What door do you need to open? My prayer is you will discover the truth of Hebrews 13:5-6: “For He himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.’” (NKJV)

Randy Thomas
Interim Executive Pastor

MERCY MONDAYS

CURRENT MERCY MONDAY
SUPPORT GROUPS:

DIVORCECARE
FORGIVEN & SET FREE
GRIEFSHARE
GRIEVING THE CHILD I NEVER KNEW
MENDING THE SOUL
THE LIGHTHOUSE
TOUCH OF HEALING

STARTS SEPT 21 | MONDAYS AT 7P
MISSION68.ORG/MERCYMONDAYS

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS
LOOKING FOR SUPPORT, NO MATTER
WHAT THE NEED, ATTENDING MERCY
MONDAYS IS THE FIRST STEP.

LOST SHEEP // by Terry Baldridge

When I came to MISSION over 5 years ago, I was exhausted and scared. I was blind to the fact that my exhaustion came from decades of coping mechanisms that brought temporary relief but had a strange-hold on my life.

My coping mechanisms stemmed from 7 years of chronic childhood sexual abuse by my father which for many years was a daily horrific nightmare, and a 21 year marriage of physical, verbal and emotional abuse. In my childhood, I learned to survive in chaos and fear...over time, fear became normal. And the prolonged abuse in my marriage only solidified that.

So, when I divorced at age 38, I dealt with the abuse by burying the past, pasting on a socially-acceptable-pretty mask, and rushing towards the future. I may have looked like I had a clue because I worked very hard to look confident, beautiful, brainy and completely irresistible. But in reality, I had no clue what normal should look or feel like. I struggled with how to piece myself back together and move forward and I was determined to live the life I never had and do everything I always wanted to do. Behind my socially-acceptable pretty mask, I was still the scared little girl in survival mode feeling worthless in God's eyes. I believed that He was observantly passive when it came to me. I felt like a fraud. My deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviors covered deep despair and an insurmountable fear that pain was always just around the corner. I struggled desperately to control my world and everyone in it, having long ago decided that surviving life was up to me alone. Fear ruled every choice I made.

For decades I had used God like some folks use room service at a hotel. I told Him briefly what I needed, and expected it to come knocking at my door within minutes. Although I was a Christian, God and I were strangers. Standing in my pride, I felt God had a lot to prove to me but in reality, I was one of His lost sheep.

Although I was a Christian, God and I were strangers. Standing in my pride, I felt God had a lot to prove to me but in reality, I was one of His lost sheep.

By the time God led me to the mercy ministries at MISSION, I had a laundry list of coping behaviors that were automatic, habitual, and varied depending on what season of my life I was in. I was a workaholic, shopaholic, foodaholic, potaholic, dramaholic, manaholic, fantasy-holic, and busy-holic. I used these behaviors to deaden the pain of abuse, fill the emptiness in my soul, and emotionally numb and isolate myself.

What I found at MISSION were many excellent programs and tools to help me manage my life and thoughts and heal from hurts and grow spiritually. God began to change me when the pain of staying the same became greater than the pain it took to change.

I've learned to take comfort in the fact that God gets it when I don't. I don't understand why He allows some things to happen, but I do know He's an infinite God and understands what I cannot. I learned He does not stop a lot of things that cause Him pain, and that I am not immune to the evil in this world. I know that I can lean on Him in the midst of chaos knowing He will meet me in my depths. I've given up judging God and instead I spend time learning who He is.

I was a lost sheep, but God sought me out, He brought me back to the safety of His flock, away from pain and darkness, and into the light. I now have some of the best friends I've ever had in my life. They are friends that I can talk to about my deepest fears and challenges, that will love and support me like I've never before experienced. I love Mercy Mondays and being part of this community of people who choose to walk without their masks on.

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33



BEHIND THE WHITE PICKET FENCE

a fictional story

by Janet Shoaff

Madeleine spoke soothingly through the phone to her sobbing daughter. “Shelby. Honey. If only you weren’t so far away, maybe I could—” Not letting her mom finish, Shelby continued her tear-soaked tirade. “How could he! I mean, he just wastes two years of my life . . . then—then throws it all away!” A deep breath. “Stupid me! I actually thought he was so nervous because he was going to propose!”

“Maybe Rob’s simply—”

“Stop!” Anger short-circuited the tears. “Don’t try to make it better!” Madeleine sighed. “Okay . . . but God must have someone better, and when He puts the two of you together—”

“You mean like you and Dad?” Sarcasm laced her words. “Excuse me if I don’t want a marriage that’s cold and—and . . . apathetic!” Madeleine winced. “The only time you’re really a couple is at church!” Then, Shelby coldly detailed everything she considered wrong with her parents’ relationship. Knowing Shelby spoke from her own pain, but unable to endure anymore, Madeleine ended the call, grabbed her

half-full wine glass like a life preserver and finished it off before pouring another one... and then another.

Maybe she and Craig weren’t models for happily-ever-after, but avoiding divorce must mean something! At least Shelby didn’t know about her dad’s “mistress”, the computer . . . the pornography. Even Craig didn’t know that Madeleine had discovered his “hobby” ages ago. Well, she’d had a jaw-clenching day at work, and she couldn’t deal with this now. She poured more wine and took her glass outside, then plopped onto the double lounge that faced the pool, a lounge meant for lovers but that she always sat on alone.

Craig’s fingers drummed the desk in his home office. It was midnight, but replaying Maddie’s account of Shelby’s call made sleep impossible. Shelby’s broken heart saddened him, but her opinion of him and Maddie was appalling. He swallowed an enormous lump of anxiety, unsure if it came from the impact of his daughter’s call . . . or from his struggle not to turn on the computer. With their secret places “photo-shopped” out, people assumed that they were just a normal family. Successful investment business for him, banking career for Maddie . . . great house . . . beautiful daughter . . . good church.

He exhaled loudly and let the past replay in his mind like a familiar movie. He and Maddie, crazy in love, had married soon after college. They hadn’t been Christians then, but they’d known they would be together forever. Just thinking of those early days brought a smile. So much enthusiasm for life. So much laughter. But then, Maddie unexpectedly got pregnant that very first year. He’d been so focused on material success and the “necessity” of two incomes that he’d convinced her to “wait” to have a family. He still remembered her expression after they’d decided to abort, her blue eyes clouded by doubt, but filled with trust in him.

Later, after they’d both come to Christ, he realized how terribly wrong he’d been. But then, as if to prove His forgiveness, the

Lord had given them Shelby. By the time she was born, both he and Maddie were successful in business, and the past had become just that, the past. But truthfully, his wife had been withdrawing from him inch by inch since the abortion, even after accepting Christ. Her career became her primary obsession, then Shelby. Maddie was always too tired to respond to his touch, and wine was her nightly companion. The chasm grew so wide that at some point he'd decided "what's the harm" and viewed porn for the first time. Now, it was his pleasure and his torture, besieging his mind with intrusive images day and night, creating an insatiable appetite for more excitement . . . like possibly succumbing to the not-so-subtle advances of his gorgeous new assistant. He yawned and thought about getting some sleep. But instead, he turned on the computer.

As the congregation sang the final song, Craig hung his head, frozen by the magnitude of his sin and hypocrisy. While today's lesson from Matthew had focused on false religion, it penetrated his heart like a laser and made his hands clammy with fear. He might be a Christian, but was he really any different than "dead people's bones in white-washed tombs"?

The Worship Pastor gave his weekly invitation for anyone who needed prayer or support to come forward. He needed help! But how could he risk exposing his wretchedness to people who'd known him for years? And then, Craig didn't know if he thought it or actually heard, "It's okay", but with courage that he didn't know was possible, he stepped out into the aisle and walked forward.

As Madeleine prepared dinner, she thought about the six months since Craig first sought help at church. What a difference! He'd confessed his weaknesses and apologized—not putting a shred of blame on her—and now, he loved being with her. They even laughed! And they talked constantly about everything . . . everything except their

first child. He'd tried, but she simply couldn't go there. She'd never felt forgiven for that. She attended Women's Bible Study now, and she couldn't get something out of her mind that Bella, her group leader, had said yesterday. "While people rank sins by degree, God doesn't. Consequences of our sin may vary in severity, but a single lie requires our Savior's sacrifice as much as adultery." And then, Bella had shared her story. Madeleine still couldn't believe it, but Bella . . . sweet, gracious, wise Bella . . . had once been a ruthlessly ambitious career woman who aborted two babies.

Unexpected tears stung Madeleine's eyes. She stopped chopping carrots, found her phone, took a deep breath and dialed. When Bella answered, Madeleine asked, "Can we talk?"

This work of fiction is based upon real-life situations. Any of us can "fill in the blank" and consider where we need the courage to open ourselves to help from our brothers and sisters-in-Christ.

2 Corinthians 1: 3 & 4

Janet Shoaff is an author of contemporary Christian novels. Grateful to Jesus for eternal life, husband Michael, family and friends.

MERCY OFFERING

Take a look at how God has blessed the people of MISSION through the Mercy Offering

This year the Mercy offering has provided financial relief, in crisis situations, to **69 MISSION families**, which includes **113 children**.



The Mercy offering has kept **40 MISSION individuals** and / or families in their homes this year.



The Mercy offering has reconnected and / or kept electricity and utilities on in **42 MISSION homes** this year.



Crisis situations that the Mercy offering has assisted MISSION families/individuals with:

- Housing for Mission families who have suddenly become homeless
- Resources and necessities for children of Mission families, such as diapers, formula, clothing, food, as well as car seats and other items
- Basic necessities following a devastating house fire
- Help for those in the midst of medical emergencies
- Help with expenses caused by the loss of a spouse or child

The Mercy offering has assisted single moms and widows by providing over \$8000 for the TLCC car care clinic. At TLCC this year:



185
of cars serviced



86
quarts of oil added



128
wiper blades replaced

74 
tires checked



check engine lights addressed

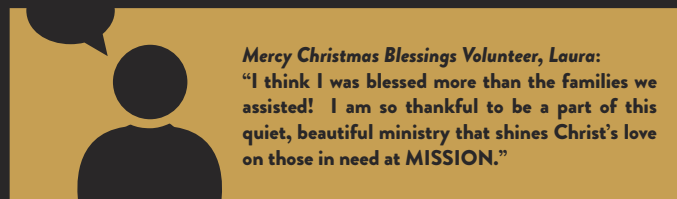
Many other issues addressed, such as bad motor mounts, oil leaks, radiator leaks, loose steering wheel, etc.



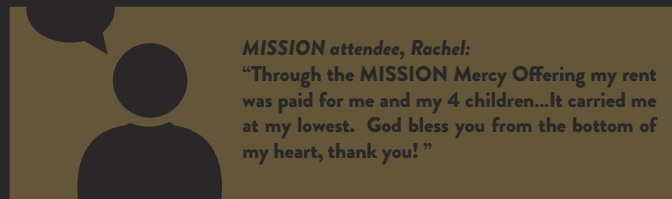
The Mercy offering helps offset cost for MISSION's Christmas Blessings Ministry, which provides food, necessities and clothing for MISSION individuals and families in need during the holidays. Last Christmas 27 individuals or families were blessed.

Of those 27 individuals or families we blessed:

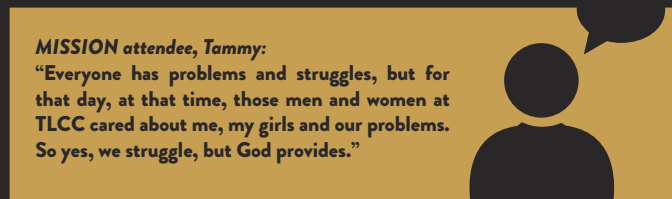
- A single mom, who was due to deliver on the 26th of December, with necessities for her baby, including car seat and diapers
- Supplies for an aunt and Christmas gifts for her niece and nephew, who she was adopting
- A widow who had just lost her husband
- A widower whose family could not be with him for the holidays
- Several families or individuals facing serious or terminal health issues
- Grandparents raising their grandchildren



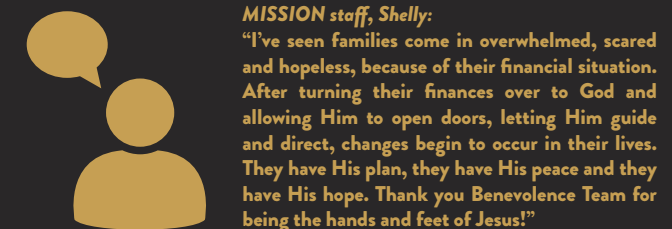
Mercy Christmas Blessings Volunteer, Laura:
“I think I was blessed more than the families we assisted! I am so thankful to be a part of this quiet, beautiful ministry that shines Christ's love on those in need at MISSION.”



MISSION attendee, Rachel:
“Through the MISSION Mercy Offering my rent was paid for me and my 4 children...It carried me at my lowest. God bless you from the bottom of my heart, thank you!”



MISSION attendee, Tammy:
“Everyone has problems and struggles, but for that day, at that time, those men and women at TLCC cared about me, my girls and our problems. So yes, we struggle, but God provides.”



MISSION staff, Shelly:
“I've seen families come in overwhelmed, scared and hopeless, because of their financial situation. After turning their finances over to God and allowing Him to open doors, letting Him guide and direct, changes begin to occur in their lives. They have His plan, they have His peace and they have His hope. Thank you Benevolence Team for being the hands and feet of Jesus!”

CALENDAR

Aug, Sept, Oct and Nov

AUGUST

- 10** / 55+ Friendship Connection (weekly)
- 13** / Student Ministries Parent Resource Night
- 14** / Young Adults Gathering (weekly)
- 15** / Celebrate Recovery/The Landing (weekly)
- 16** / Justice Men
- 16/17** / 3rd Sunday Charity
- 18** / The Lighthouse
- 18** / Touch of Healing
- 20** / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Support Group
- 20** / JHM House Group Launch
- 20** / HSM House Group Launch
- 21** / Women's Fall Bible Studies Begin (weekly)
- 26** / Blessed Life Series Begins
- 26** / MISSION College Gathering
- 27** / Men's Life Principles Study Begins (weekly)
- 27** / Global Prayer - Justice Ministries
- 28** / Men's Study - 33 The Series, Volume 5 Begins (weekly)
- 29** / College Briefing Begins

SEPTEMBER

- 1** / Celebrate Recovery/The Landing (weekly)
- 4** / Young Adults Gathering (weekly)
- 7** / 55+ Friendship Connection (weekly)
- 9** / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Volunteer Training
- 9** / Men's Fraternity II Study begins (weekly)
- 14** / Child Dedication Class
- 15** / Mercy Mondays Kickoff
- 15** / Financial Peace University Begins
- 17** / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Support Group
- 20** / Justice Men
- 20/21** / 3rd Sunday Charity
- 22** / Community Invite Team Training Begins
- 23** / MISSION College Gathering
- 24** / Global Prayer - Justice Ministries
- 24** / HSM Couch Races
- 18/19** / 3rd Sunday Charity
-
- 25** / [datenightphx](#)
-
- 26-28** / Women's Fall Retreat
- 28** / Child Dedication Ceremony

OCT

- 1 / Celebrate Recovery/The Landing (weekly)
- 2 / Women's Eat, Worship & Communion Event
- 2 / Young Adults Gathering (weekly)
- 4-5 / Baptisms
- 5 / 55+ Friendship Connection (weekly)
- 6 / Marriage ER Support Group Begins (weekly)
- 15 / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Support Group
- 16 / Men's Study - Andy Stanley's, Go Fish Begins (weekly)
- 18 / Justice Men
- 18/19 / 3rd Sunday Charity
- 21 / MISSION Marriage University of One Course Begins
- 24 / Decade of Courage
- 25 / TLCC Event
- 28 / MISSION College Gathering
- 29 / Global Prayer - Justice Ministries

NOV

- 1 / Celebrate Recovery/The Landing (weekly)
- 2 / Esther's Hope Festival for Foster and Adoptive Families
- 2 / 55+ Friendship Connection (weekly)
- 2 / Child Dedication Class
- 6 / Young Adults Gathering (weekly)
- 9 / GriefShare's Surviving the Holidays
- 11 / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Volunteer Training

- 15 / Justice Men
- 15/16 / 3rd Sunday Charity
- 16 / Child Dedication Ceremony
- 19 / Esther's Hope Foster Ministry Support Group
- 21 / MISSION Marriage Movie on the Lawn
- 25 / MISSION College Gathering
- 26 / Global Prayer - Justice Ministries



Mission FINANCIALS

For current financial statements or to give,
visit mission68.org/give

DAVE RAMSEY'S

FINANCIAL *Peace* UNIVERSITY

Learn how to achieve your financial goals and God's plan for your life.

Begins September 15 | Register at mission68.org/fpu

LEAD PASTOR UPDATE



For updates and information
on the lead pastor search,
visit mission68.org/leadpastor

CAREGIVER



SUPPORT MINISTRY

Support, fellowship and biblical encouragement
for individuals caring for loved ones.

Coming December 1, 2014

STUDENTS

JHM/HSM HOUSE GROUPS LAUNCH
AUGUST 20 | 7P

MORE INFORMATION AT
MISSION68.ORG/STUDENTS

Based on a real conversation from a real missional community at MISSION...



Jennifer at 4:36pm

Hey everyone,
Judy, who currently goes to our bible study and is a single mom of two children, had her car break down today on the side of the highway and her transmission blew. If anyone in our group is a mechanic or knows of a great mechanic that would be awesome... she has no one.
Also if anyone has an extra car maybe that they could lend out for a few days while hers is being fixed, I know that would really bless her, as she has no car right now. Let me know!

Message



Sandy at 4:38pm

When our transmission went out we used ABC Transmission. Every mechanic & shop we talked to referred us to them.

Message



Judy at 4:42pm

I am worried about price, money is very tight for me and the kids right now.

Message



Jennifer at 4:44pm

Tom I heard that you are a mechanic?

Message



Tom at 5:10pm

Yes I am! I will get in touch with Judy ASAP.

Message



Judy at 5:43pm

I spoke with Tom from our group and he is going to help me! In the mean time the Sandy has offered her van to me for the week! I cant tell you all how much I appreciate EVERY one of you. Its a different feeling for me to actually have a group of friends to come along side me and do life with me! I am truly grateful.

Message



Jennifer at 5:50pm

Yay! I love this group . Thanks for stepping forward everyone! If God is for us then who can be against us? .

Message



MISSIONAL
COMMUNITIES
CONNECT + GROW

Find your community today at mission68.org/mc



Become a MISSION Member online at
mission68.org/membership

Marriage is a big deal at MISSION and in our community. Statistics show that marriage is a primary concern among our neighbors and those without a faith background. Check out some of these stats that show what marriage looks like in and around MISSION.



An increase in date nights shows a decrease in divorce rate by a factor of



Regularly attending church increases marital health and decreases the divorce rate (positively affecting marriage success rates from 25-50%)



Over **80%** of couples are happily married. Marriages don't have to be perfect to be happy, most people enjoy being married.

#1 demographic in this community is married couples



single parents and college students

MISSION
marriage

mission68.org/marriage



According to the 2007 census, the success rate of first marriages is at 72%



SEASON *of* HOPE UPDATE

This past summer, we went through HOPE, our season focusing on Justice at MISSION. We highlighted several ministries, cast new vision for some and launched a couple more. One of the new ministry partnerships we launched is in Cambodia.

The nation of Cambodia is a global hub for sex trafficking. There, MISSION partners with In His Steps International (IHSI), a highly impactful, Gospel-centered organization that restores vulnerable and exploited girls. Together, we are funding an initial project to double the efforts of IHSI over 3 years.

In June of this year, a team from MISSION established the official kick off with a short-term mission trip that allowed us to meet the team in Cambodia with our leadership team here at MISSION. It was a blessed ten days of getting to know our partners and helping aid in the restorations of these girls who have been exploited. Our team witnessed that in such a dark place God provided hope and a light that shines very bright for the future of Cambodia. We can't wait to send our second team out in October and third team in January. If you are someone that is being called to take a step of faith and follow Him, a trip to Cambodia is a great opportunity for you. There, you will see firsthand how God is working to bring hope and a bright future to these women. Visit mission68.org/trips for more info.

GUATEMALA

October 4-12: Open Team

November 8-16: Women's Ministry

CAMBODIA

October 15-27: Open Team

MEXICO

October 17-20: Open Team

FIJI

October 19- 31: Construction

MALAWI

October 4-18: Open Team

Urban area of Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Photo by Abby Andrus



mission
community church

COURAGE

from MISSION Community Church | 480.545.4024 or mission68.org | 4450 E. Elliot Rd, Gilbert AZ.