



CAPITOL[®] COMMISSION

Reaching Capitol Communities for Christ[®]

October, 2016

Dear Friend:

I sent out an email update recently that many people found informative and encouraging. I am sending it to you here again as a printed letter in case you would like to read it again or share it with someone else.

As you've no doubt noticed, there is a gloomy cloud of negative talk in the media these days related to the upcoming presidential election and to our government in general. Some of this is well-deserved and for legitimate reasons. I'm sure I don't need to convince you of the darkness that permeates the world of politics.

At the same time though, we can take heart that God's light is reaching even into this God-ordained sphere (*Romans 13:1-7*). Even now, many wonderful things are happening in the halls of government that will never be reported by the news, and these are things we can rejoice in!

May I share with you some of the encouraging ways I have seen God's light shining this year in our California State Capitol?

1. The light of The Gospel is shining!

I've shared the Good News of Jesus with many legislators, staff, and lobbyists this year. God always uses this in important ways. For example, I met with one legislator a year ago over coffee. As we spoke, I felt unusually prompted to speak very directly to him about the Lord, though he seemed largely uninterested. In the months that followed, he kept his distance, making it clear that he had no desire to meet again. Then, to my surprise, he recently invited me to his office. This time, things were different. He shared about some new and significant challenges in his life. I again shared about Christ with him, but this time I had his full attention and interest. Behind closed doors, we bowed together in prayer as he asked God to forgive his sins through Jesus and take control of his life. He shared with me afterwards that when we prayed he felt such peace that it was as if a river was flowing through his heart. I smiled when he said this, because he spoke without knowing the words of Jesus in *John 7:38* "*Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water!'*" I gave him his first Bible, explained how to read it, and invited him to our Legislators' Bible Studies. God is clearly at work in this man's life and I am looking forward to seeing how he grows in the Lord in the future.

John 8:12 "*Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.'*"

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2. The light of the Word of God is shining!

For eight years, I've been teaching weekly Bible Studies in the Capitol for State Legislators, Statewide Leaders, Staff, Lobbyists, and State Employees. These gatherings are a highlight of my week. They are solidly biblical and uncompromising, but also bipartisan with both parties well represented. We meet inside the Capitol in legislative hearing rooms. We pass out New American Standard Bibles and together turn to the next passage in whatever Bible book we are studying, which this year continued to be the Gospel of Mark. I teach carefully through the next passage without skipping any verses, with an aim to help everyone to understand it. This is followed by lively group discussion and prayer about how it relates to their lives and work. It is truly amazing to see that every passage of God's word relates in some significant way!

One day, I met with a Democrat legislator in his office, and he confessed that that even though he is highly educated he knows almost nothing about the Bible. When I visited him the next week I presented him with a leather-backed copy of God's Word. He eagerly listened as we sat together and I summarized its message, and he said he was looking forward to beginning to read the Gospel of John that very night.

This year we have also distributed hundreds of leather-bound Bible devotional books. I am encouraged to see these beautiful Scripture-filled books prominently displayed on the desks of many of the most powerful men and women in our state, and a number of them have told me they read it every morning. Who knows how this might help them, and our country?!

Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"



3. The light of Prayer is shining!

I'm thrilled to see that many of our legislators seem more interested in prayer this year than ever before. One Assembly Member started a weekly prayer meeting in his office with many of his legislative colleagues. Another started a weekly conference call with dozens of pastors, including myself, to ask for prayer for her and her staff during this challenging campaign season. And at one of our Legislators Bible

Studies, a State Assembly Member prayed that God would bless even her political enemies.

One day, I was blown away to participate in a gathering that suddenly formed in a Capitol hallway to pray for someone. Included in the prayer circle with me were a visiting U.S. Congress Member, two State Senators, two lobbyists, and a legislative staff member. As we prayed, I was so moved as I realized that we had representatives from so many branches of government united together in humble prayer before God.

Psalm 34:5 "Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed."

4. The light is shining in Unexpected Places!

Ministry to our State Capitol is definitely missions, and I am always on the lookout for new ways to reach out within this unique cultural context.

This year, I started visiting many (up to seven or eight in one week) legislator fundraiser cocktail parties in downtown restaurants in order to mingle with legislators and lobbyists from both parties. I feel very grateful to be welcomed at these gatherings since lobbyists contribute thousands of dollars per event to attend. I rejoice as I see God at work in conversations even in such an unusual environment. He is also at work in private conversations on the Senate and Assembly legislative floors during sessions. Furthermore, I have received public endorsements from over thirty legislators, which is a chance for them to courageously express their faith to their colleagues. In addition, some legislators and staff and lobbyists even give of their personal finances to help support this ministry.

John 1:5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

5. The light is shining Nationally!

Many of the state legislators and staff we reach out to work closely with national leaders or will go on to serve in Washington D.C. themselves, and so I rejoice in how God is helping our entire nation. This year, for example, a U.S. Congress member met with me for advice on how to approach a difficult issue. Another candidate for U.S. Congress invited me to attend five of his events to share with pastors about this ministry. There is no end to what God can do in our nation and our world as we seek Him and declare His praises!

Ephesians 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Let's Keep Shining the Light!

As we hear the latest news about the elections or the political process, it may be tempting to just curse the darkness and turn away. However, we have a higher calling.

Philippians 2:14-16 "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life."

Our role is to be “lights in the world,” “holding fast the word,” which literally means holding it tightly and following it while at the same time holding it outward to offer it to others.

As we do this, God will continue do amazing things for His glory ... even in the halls of government!

Thank you for your partnership that enables us to keep the light on in California. We continue to rely entirely on contributions for this work, and the opportunities continue to expand, so your ongoing help is very much appreciated.

Thank you also for your prayers for this work and for my family and me personally. Last month, Valerie and I helped our eighteen-year-old son Lucas to move into his dorm room at U.C. Irvine where he is majoring in computer science. We appreciate your prayers for him as he settles in and finds a church home, and for us as we adjust to only having one child living at home still (our daughter Hannah who attends Sacramento State). Also, I had extensive shoulder surgery on September 29 to fix a torn rotator cuff and a long-time joint problem. Full recovery can take up to a year, so I appreciate prayers for healing.

Finally, I’m sure you join me in praying for America, and for the Golden State of California!

Shining the Light to California's Leaders,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank".

Frank Erb

P.S. If you don’t already receive my occasional email updates, please consider signing up for them on our website at CapitolCom.org. You can also find frequent updates on my Facebook page at “*Frank Erb – Capitol Commission California.*”

