



FEBRUARY
2015

An Unsung Hero

As most of you know, one of my tennis heroes is Rafa Nadal. Since Rafa has won 14 majors and is, arguably, one of the greatest tennis players of all time, it is easy to make Rafa a hero. However, I have recently added a new hero to my tennis pantheon and that is someone who is not so obvious. In fact, I doubt if anyone has even heard of him. He is Tim Smyczek (pronounced SMEE-check), ranked 114th in the world. During the second round of last week's Australian Open, he came within one game of upsetting my man, Rafa.



Pastor Bob Zoba

But that is not why he is my newest hero. Instead, it was something that he did during a critical moment of that second-round match. In the fifth and final set, Rafa was up 6-5, 30-love. That meant that Rafa needed just two more points to survive a near-disastrous upset and to advance to the third round. However, just as he tossed the ball to serve, a knuckle-headed fan screamed vociferously from the sidelines, thereby causing Rafa to hit the serve long. Although this untimely shriek is very much against the staid rules of proper court etiquette, it does not merit the server an automatic do-over. Instead, it is something modern players have had to learn to live with.

However, it was at this point that Smyczek did something totally unexpected. He held up two fingers to the court umpire to indicate that he felt Rafa should be given the opportunity to serve again...twice. In other words, at one of the most critical points in the match, in one of the biggest venues in the world, in a game where his back was against the wall, and he risked both elimination and/or the chance to beat one of the greatest tennis players ever, Smyczek instead, awarded his opponent a do-over. A do-over! Unbelievable! Professional athletes simply don't do that.

After the match, Rafa, who is a class-act himself, said to the crowd, "I want to congratulate Tim — he's a real gentleman for what he did in that last game. Not a lot of people will do this at 6-5 in the fifth."

Hours later, at the obligatory press conference, reporters had already moved on and wanted to address other topics with Rafa, but he insisted instead on talking about the sportsmanship of Smyczek. "I think he played well, but is true that what he did at the end of the fifth is just amazing. I congratulate [him]. I say it on the court, but I want to say here, too. Very few players can do that after four hours-something of a match, 5-6, Love-30. So, [I] just will say thanks to him because he's a great example, what he did today."

One of Rafa's handlers added, "I think he [Smyczek] deserves the

Sunday Services
10:00 a.m.

Adult Sunday School
9:00am

Sunday School
PK-12
10:30am

Choir Practice
Sundays 12pm
Thursdays 7pm

Weekly Activities

Ladies Bible Study
Tuesdays noon-2pm

Small Group
@ the Rivera's
Tuesday 7pm

Men's Breakfast
Wednesday 7am

Women's Study
Wednesday 7pm

Prayer Service
Thursday 7pm

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Gustavo Gonzalez
Youth Leader

sportsmanship award for the next 10 years, and I'm going to be pushing for that. I'm sure that Rafa would agree and everybody would agree. I've never seen that, and I've been in tennis for 19 years. Unbelievable."

I believe that is a lesson for all of us parents who want our kids to do well in sports. Naturally, we want them to do their best athletically and achieve as much as they are able in terms of prizes and awards. And no parent wants their child to lose. However, what we should fear even more than our child losing a competition is our child losing his or her character in the process.

Smyczek's coach, Billy Heiser, echoes that sentiment. He said of Smyczek, "I knew he was going to [do it]. He kind of glanced over at me and I didn't nod or say anything. I knew he was going to. That's just who he is; he's such a great guy. The one thing he can always leave the court with is the character he brings, and that's just true to who he is, just him being himself."

But where does such character come from? How do we build it into our own kids? Well, I did a little checking into Smyczek background and discovered two things. First, he is a young man who shares our Christian faith as he quotes Christian blogs and Pope Francis on his Twitter account. In an age when so many Tweets are too profane to read, let alone repeat, it is refreshing to find a young man who is not afraid to speak of his faith.

But secondly, Smyczek obviously comes from a family where those faith principles are reaffirmed by believing parents in everyday life through consistent example and tough love. How do I know that must be true? Because of Smyczek's final explanation of why he did what he did on that court last week. He said that although most other players would not have done what he did, he was compelled to from something within him. "[Besides], I know my parents would have killed me if I didn't. It was the right thing to do."

Parents, are you listening? It is not simply the things that we say, but the things that we do in critical moments that are important. If we ever hope that what is taught by us is truly caught by our kids, then we are going to have to practice what we preach, even if it means losing, in the short run, something that we cannot keep, so that we can win, in the long run, what we, or they, can never lose.

Peace.

Pastor Bob



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The endeavor that many of you are making to read through the Bible in a year, or the New Testament in three months is much more than just a good idea. In a sense, you have made a vow to the Lord to get to know Him better by reading His book. If you read about vows in the Bible, you know God takes this very seriously. (Matthew 5:33, Numbers 30:2, etc.). If you made the commitment, persevere. God will be pleased.

You decide to write a book of instruction for your son. You pour your whole heart and soul into it - you write everything that you think is important in life. Then you give your thirty year old son this book. You have written this book with him in mind, and you are delighted when he is so grateful and tells you he promises to read it from cover to cover. It's not a very long book, and he says he'll be done in a few weeks. You can hardly wait for him to finish it so you can discuss it with him. After all you've learned a lot in your forty-plus years and you know that your experiences will be a blessing to him.

Several months go by and while spending time with your son, you notice the book on the bottom of a pile of other books and magazines. You ask your son, 'what did you think of the book I wrote?' He answers, 'oh yea, thanks so much, I started to read the book and it was really great, but I've been so busy with work and in my spare time I just want to relax.' As the conversation goes on, your son tells you about his crazy schedule - work, the weekly pick-up basketball game, the SuperBowl party that he's hosting, and the apps he has bought for his smart phone. He talks about the movies he's seen, the TV series that he can't stop watching, etc. So you smile and keep your disappointment to yourself. You can't force him to read the book, even though you know how desperately you want him to read it all the way through in the hopes that he'll gain wisdom and understanding.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the wisdom and grant you understanding. If you haven't committed to reading the Bible, then maybe you should prayerfully consider it. Pastor Bob and Christie have lots of ideas to get you started on this very significant journey!

Tuesday Evening Bible Study: Biblical Topics

Each Tuesday evening at the home of Luis Alberto and Loraine Rivera, a group meets to study God's Word. The present session has allowed us to have everyone and anyone join in whichever day they are able, for we do one topic a night. Loraine has prepared a booklet guide for all participants which helps a lot. Additionally, the study is set on our TV screen and those who need larger letters are taken care of. The current session has to do with our priorities in Christ and to that theme we have discussed: "Who's on First!", "Integrity and Submitting to Authority", and "Taking Personal Responsibility".

We meet in our home on Tuesday nights from 7:00pm to 9:00pm and we are pretty formal with the time in respect for those who arrive on time and need to leave on time. Our address is:

Urb. San Francisco / 171 Lirios Street / Rio Piedras, PR / (787) 232 - 8654

One last comment, we are like every other activity at the Church, lots of cheese, crackers, sweets and juice. Please join us, plenty of room available.



Dennis Gonzalez writes, Amarilis and I start a new tennis season with matches this weekend. I went to a two-day weekend training in mentoring last week. On Feb 7, I have, as part of the mentoring program, a Saturday retreat called "sogas" where we perform different tasks related to teamwork and risk taking....you know that I like risks. Then in March, I have a five-day retreat with all the mentors and the youngsters together for bonding and to get paired up as mentor and learner? After that we have a one-year commitment to mentor these kids. It should be fun.



Rashel Krankovich writes, To celebrate turning the big 3-0, I went on a cruise to the Bahamas with my sister! :)which caused me to wonder why I ever left the Caribbean!

Madelyn Vega writes: Xavi has been going to a new school this year since he was admitted to the University Gardens High School which is a very demanding school. We just got his grades and I am so happy to share that he got 6 As!!! I am so proud!!! As to me I'm working on the final editing of my Children's stories book which should be ready for the next school year. My health is also better so God has provided many blessings!



Victoria Woodruff is selling the famous Girl Scout cookies this year. See her after church.

Fabio Silva de Jesus will be getting married here at 2UC on March 7th.

Stan Pinkerton did another great job as our Treasurer in crunching numbers and presenting our 2015 budget!

Luis Alberto Rivera writes, Did you know that our Bible Study is going through a session on "Biblical Topics"? (see article on page 3!)



Elsy Perez and family suffered a fire at their house, but everyone is fine and back to normal.

Anna McGuire & Don Jondrow made a special visit to 2UC and PR over the holidays. We hope the come back soon...for good;-)



It's official! **Ed Krueger** asked **Janette Quiles** to marry him? And she said yes!!! The wedding ceremony will be August 15 at 2UC.. A marriage made at Second Union - and in heaven!! Congratulations! We are so happy for them!

Lisa Gervitz de Defendini writes: The Lord continues to bless us. Daniel just started his own business, Magna Specialty Service, Inc. We are very excited about this and hopeful of much success (Job 23:10). Daniela was accepted at St, Mary's School for Pre-K!!! One year old Sophia is mobile...very fast walker! Lisa was named Young Mother of the Year 2015 of San Juan by American Mother's, Inc.—PR Chapter!

Eddaliss and Fernando Bentz are also expecting another baby, this time, they hope, a girl.

Bill Heffley reports: We enjoyed a family get together in Sarasota for my brother's 73rd birthday. He has Parkinson's, same as Janet Luttrell. All brothers and sisters were there in Sarasota. We had a memorable time. Enjoying the sunshine still after spending winter in Indiana. Bill notes that he has just started reading, Prayer, Does it Make Any Difference by Philip Yancey.

Mike & Irma LaLlave have been traveling all over the eastern part of the US.

Paul Franki has had some serious medical issues of late but he's now out of ICU and in a regular room. Hopefully, he will be back home soon.

Manny Fernandez's sister Monica has been visiting with us this last month.

Sad news: **John Doncel** will be relocating to PA next month;-)

Von & Janie DeLoach are back on the island after having spent over a year in Los Angeles helping care for their grandbaby! We're glad to have them back!

Hector and Cherish Gonzalez are thrilled to announce that they're going to have a baby! Due in September, this year!



The Zobas and the Yosts visited the beautiful islands of Culebra and Culebrita in January? Part of their adventure was a

trek up to the ruins of the Culebrita lighthouse. After a perilous climb up somewhat dangerous stairs, they were rewarded with spectacular views of the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

A library was recently built in Malawi, Africa which was dedicated to **Pastor Bob's father, Carl Zoba**. The money was donated by Bob's sister and brother-in-law, **Joy and Tom Mistele** and is a project of the



Hamels Foundation. In Malawi there are over one million orphans due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Malawi is one of the poorest, most impoverished nations in the world. The Hamels Foundation is dedicated to building a primary school (Grades 1-8) that will educate nearly 2,000 boys and girls in the Mulanje District of Malawi. The first step towards breaking the cycle of AIDS is education, as well as tending to basic needs such as shelter and food.

Vitamins for Honduras

Second Union Church has always answered the call.

The folks and families of Los Encuentros, in the Valley of Comayagua in Honduras, are in need of children's and adult vitamins. For this purpose I have elected to start a drive in order to correct this need. I am calling on each of you to please give a bottle of vitamins (no matter what size it is). A box will be set up in the narthex for this purpose. An alternative method of helping is to leave cash which we will use to purchase vitamins.

"When the Lord comes calling, you have to move." B. Dylan

Thank you. - Brother joe

Bible Study Opportunities

Adult Sunday School (9am)

Book: 2nd Samuel

Lizzette Kelley leads a study on the book of 2nd Samuel in the conference room at 2UC.

Tuesday Lunchtime Study (noon-2pm)

Book: Girls with Swords by Lisa Bevere
Join us as we meet over lunch to discuss the study, pray and share our lives with each other. Bring your own lunch or order from Anita for \$8 (anita00926@aol.com) Contact Christie for more information: 787-717-4001.



Tuesday Evening Bible Study (7pm)

Study: Biblical Topics

Meeting at the home of Luis Alberto and Loraine Rivera in the San Francisco neighborhood, the group is open to all and anyone can join at any time! For more information contact Luis Alberto: (787) 232 - 8654

Wednesday Evening Bible Study (7pm)

Book: 12 Women of the Bible

This group meets at the home of Anita Rodriguez. for more information contact Anita: anita00926@aol.com



Condado / Isla Verde Study

Contact Pastor Bob or Laurie Foster for days and times!

Inappropriate Proof of God

Some people say: "Look at all the suffering in the world. That is proof there is no God."

Can I say? : "Look at all the joy in the world. That is proof there is a God."

Yes. No. Why? Both theist and atheist have to answer these objections.

The right answer is no. The joy in the world is not definitive proof of the existence of God, the same way that the suffering in world in not definitive proof of the non-existence of God.

I, as a Christian, have Genesis 3 to try to understand it. What do you have? I, as a Christian, have the rest of the Bible to help me cope with it. What do you have?

I, as a Christian, have understood that I am part of the cause of the suffering in the world. Every time I ignore God's commands. With every lie, every lustful thought, every hate driven thought or action, with every self- ish thought or behavior etc. But, by realizing this, God has granted me repentance and forgiveness, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the God man.

Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life. He was tortured and murdered on a cross carrying the sins of all of humanity. Then he rose again from the grave by the power of the Holy Spirit, the same power that can act in your life, if you are willing to repent and put your trust in Him and only Him. Then God will give you a new heart with new desires, like he did with me. That is the Gospel.

God bless you.

Gustavo
Youth Leader

Sunday School Teachers for February

We thank all of our teachers who bless the children of Second Union Church through the Sunday School ministry. Please pray for them as they prepare and present their lessons!

Elsy Perez	Pre-k & K
Dalia Gonzalez	1st & 2nd
Loraine Rivera	3rd & 4th
David Benson	5th & 6th

50th Jubilee Anniversary Trip To Ponce

The 50th Jubilee Anniversary Committee is organizing a trip to Ponce on February 5th as a part of the year's celebration. A group from Second Union will be visiting the first Protestant Church on the island. If you'd like to be a part of this, contact Pastor Bob or George McMurray.



The 50th Anniversary committee is also planning a concert in the month of May and a gala in November.

We are asking for people to contribute pictures and share any stories they may have about the history of Second Union Church.

Last November I attended a training lunch for youth leaders called "Built for Boldness" hosted by Dare 2 Share ministries. This is the same organization that is hosting the teen evangelism training conference "Fearless" that our youth group is going to, this coming April.

Toward the end of the training, Greg Stier (dare 2 share president), challenged all of the attendees to write down, on the corner of one of the pages of our handbook, a number representing the amount of teens that we could be fairly sure we could take to the conference without a problem. My number was five. Then he asked us to draw a heart next to that number, and to write another number inside the heart. This second number represented the amount of teens we would like to take to the conference, but in order for that to happen God would have to show up. He asked us to take a minute to think about it and to be bold about it. My number was 15.

Keep in mind that the most teenagers that I have had on a Sunday morning is about 19, with an average of 12-15 that comes almost every Sunday. So, 15 was my bold number. God looked at this number and as of Sunday January 18 he decided to grant me the desires of my heart. Actually, He did a little Ephesians 3:20 on me! Because the list has grown to 17 students! Praise be to the Lord!

I think this is a teaser of what God is planning for the lives of these teens, and I think He will do something amazing at that conference. So, I'll ask you to please pray. Pray for the conference as a whole. Pray that all of the 17 go. Pray that they come back so on fire for Jesus that they start making people around them "uncomfortable" and give me a run for my money. Here are the names, please pray for:

Rachel & Abby McCarley, Ana & Oscar Marrero, Arlyn & Francisco Boneta, Paola & Louis Navarro, Xanthippe Krueger, Alysha Jackson, Savannah Boneta, Sofica Sandoval, Marion Medina, Joshua Estremera, Ricardo Perez, Andrew Leonard, Xavier Torres. And the adults tagging along: Elsy Perez, Lynn McClarley, Ramon China, Manuel Fernandez and Youth Leader, and Gustavo Gonzalez. 2UC Youth Pastor.

Don't miss our upcoming lunch fundraisers for the upcoming trip after the church services!



Have I ever told you my story about parrots? There is huge tree across from our house. One day I heard a lot of squawking outside and I went out to see what was making all that racket. My neighbors were standing in their driveway, father and 4 year old son and they were pointing at the tree, "Can you see them?, Can you see them?" I looked and looked but couldn't see anything.

The next I heard the parrots again. I ran out to see if I could spot them this time. My husband saw them and tried help me focus my sights on these elusive, albeit noisy birds. Nada. And so it went, everybody in the neighborhood spotted these birds but me.

One day while I was sitting on the porch listening to the parrots cawing back and forth, I said to God, "could you show them to me so I can see them too?" No sooner had these words left my mouth, a dozen of the these gold and green parrots swooped past my porch, flying at my eye level, in front of me doing a graceful coordinated figure eight. My mouth dropped in wonder and amazement. How cool is our God?

This to me was a sign, a memorial stone if you like, of God's capacity to delight us. Now every time I hear these parrots call, my call to worship, I praise God.

Lately I have noticed the louder, more strident cawing of the larger parrots, the macaws I usually see doing evening patrol on the horizon. These sounds have been coming much closer daily. Today I hurried outside when I heard them, asking God what was going on. It sounded so close. There, high up in the huge tree across from our house was a blue and gold macaw, sun and sky I call them. It was sitting on a branch at the very top. Suddenly it swooped down and flew straight down my street, right passed me and then circled back around to fly passed the front of my house, again at eye level.

Time to praise God, I thought, Time to worship.

Anita Rodriguez

Hasta Luego to the Yosts



David and Laurie Yost have been an integral part of Second Union Church during their two years on the island, and we wish them all the best as they head back to their home in Pine-top, Arizona. Laurie and David attended Second Union faithfully and supported our ministries with their time and talent. They were active in the Couples' Ministry, the Cantata and the Condado Bible Study group. Laurie was an indispensable volunteer in the Backpack ministry, the Women's Ministries, the Christmas Bazaar, the Fellowship Committee, the Tuesday Ladies Bible Study and el Grupo de Conversación (Spanish group). Plus, she filled in on the piano when Luis Tirado was away! David was a part of Pastor Bob's Saturday morning spiritual tennis group - it won't be easy to fill his shoes on the court or off!.



Praise be to God: they are already planning their return to the island. David plans to come periodically as he continues to work with CDC on the island.

We thank God for the Yosts - what a tremendous blessing they have been to us. Though they are thousands of miles away, they will always have a home in our hearts. Isn't God amazing?

