

**FIRST REFORMED
CHURCH**
keeping



IN TOUCH

June - September 2009

The LORD will guide you
always;
he will satisfy your needs
in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your
frame.
You will be like a well-
watered garden,
like a spring whose
waters never fail.



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NEWSLETTER

In Touch is the church newsletter of the First Reformed Church of St. Catharines published bi-monthly.



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A HOLY SIESTA

THE DICTIONARY DEFINES SIESTA as a midday nap, or forty winks, meant to find some rejuvenation for the rest of the day. In some cultures the heat of the day requires a break in the shade.

As we face the summer months planning vacations, weekends away, enjoyment of the

great outdoors, there is a great need for rest doing

something different. The summer often, but not always, lends itself to a break from the normal busy schedules we hold down during the rest of the year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

continued on page 2

OLDEST REFORMED CHURCH	3	MISSIONS	4
CAMP SHALOM	6	OUR CHURCH FAMILY	7
A LETTER FROM WILLY	11	BIRTHDAY CORNER	13
MISSIONARIES, NOT AID	14	FIREPROOF YOUR MARRIAGE	15
DEVOTIONS	16	HE IS GOD	18

If siesta is profitable, for physical strength, what are we doing for spiritual strength. Don't get me wrong I enjoy the presence of God in creation. In fact in Romans 1:20 we read For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. We can know and enjoy God through what we see in creation, but that never replaces, in fact it becomes idolatry if it replaces or study the bible, prayer and corporate worship.

Our siesta this summer can be directed by the invitation in Psalm 91, the one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. How you ask? Allow me to suggest the intentional attendance of worship in a shady, air conditioned sanctuary. Sit

yourself down with a book that includes inspired stories of Ruth and Naomi, Paul and Silas, and even letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation. And to bring health and relief from burdens, include many walks and talks with a Heavenly Father who delights in your praise and petition through prayer. In other words a Holy Siesta is not to get away from it all, it is to dwell in the blessing of being in a relationship with God that was accomplished through a sacrifice of death for sin in Jesus Christ, and made so real by the Holy Spirit. That would be a Holy Siesta. Now you will not find Holy Siesta in the dictionary, but you discover and enjoy by Faith.

May God grant to us a healthy, safe and Holy Siesta.

The Oldest Reformed Church in Canada

On August 12, 1909 in the home of W. J. VanLohuizen in Monarch, Alberta the official organization of Monarch Reformed Church took place. This makes the Monarch Church the oldest in the RCA in Canada, which is still in existence.

On August 15 and 16 of this year, the congregation will be celebrating their 100th anniversary. The consistory suggests that, if your holiday schedule should bring you to this part of Canada at that time, you make a point of joining in the celebrations. If it is not possible for you to be present, perhaps you could send a "letter of greeting" which could be read when greetings are brought from other churches.

When submitting an article, please include the author and/or where the contribution came from and also your own name (for the purpose of publishing it, but also for us to call you if we need to explain why we didn't include your contribution.



Missions

For His Renown... April 2009-06-01

"...Your name and renown are the desire of our hearts." (Isaiah 26: 8)

"COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Stacey gave me a wall hanging of this verse for Christmas. When I hung it up a few weeks ago I thought I would need to look up several characters to be able to read it. But a week ago I suddenly realized I could read the whole thing on my own! I was very excited. It seems a very small thing, but in the process of learning a language you have to celebrate every success, every sign of progress, no matter how small. You usually feel discouraged and overwhelmed as the more you learn the more you realize you still need to learn. The mountain ahead looms larger all the time. I have to remember to look back periodically at how far I've come and give praise to the Father for His faithfulness! I also need to constantly remind my fellow language learners of this. At the moment it seems most everyone is rather tired and discouraged. Recently a friend shared about Matthew 9: 28, where Jesus says to the blind man: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Do I believe He can and will transform me? Do I believe He can and will help me learn this language? Do I believe He will sustain me in this place? Do I believe He will use me here? 'Lord I believe, only help my unbelief!'

The beginning of this new semester has been full, as usual, with study and other activities. I've also been covering an English class on Saturdays for a lady in our group who was injured. In the midst, I have been trying to apply some of the lessons learned during the retreat I attended in my school break. Though the schedule has been busy and I'm usually tired, when I have been faithful in putting Him first and

taking moments with Him throughout the day, my heart has been at rest. And even in a week like this past one, when I have been distracted and have neglected, if I quiet down for a moment I can feel Him still there by my side. He is so faithful! Though our emotions and commitments change so quickly, 'there is no shadow of turning with Him.' What a comfort!

In the midst of the daily routine, there are some exciting things coming up! My parents arrive in less than a week! I can't wait to show off Xi'an and other beautiful parts of China to them. Also, my brother is getting married this summer, so I am coming home to attend the wedding! I'll also get a chance to see many of you during the weeks I am at home. But these trips mean I will miss 5 ½ weeks of the semester. Pray I will study hard in the time I do have here.

Thank you for persevering in your support while I try to persevere in learning! Grace and peace,

Kim

Praises:

- His faithful presence, even when I'm not paying attention!
- Life with my new roommate, Rachel, has been going very well!
- For His faithfulness in helping me learn!
- For my parents' visit!
- The Father's provision of a job for Stacey in California, working with mainland Chinese high school students!

Requests:

- Friends: Pray that Helen would continue to grow, pray that my tutor and other friends would continued on page 5 seek and find Him.
- Travel: Pray my parents and their friends will enjoy their time here in China and that everything will go smoothly. Pray also for the continued on page 5

Dear Friends,

Wow, I can't believe how the month of April has just disappeared! It has been full, namely with my parent's visit, which was fantastic!! My parents and friends Ron and Chris Koopman were here for 2 weeks, and the trip went really, really well! Thank you so much for all your prayers about it, they were answered! Transportation and all the logistics went very smoothly (for the most part!), weather was beautiful, lodging was more than satisfactory, and food was edible enough – all the major fears taken care of. There was lots of laughter and plenty of beautiful scenery! Oh, and I think they learned a bit about Chinese culture, my life here, and even how to say 'thank you' and a few other things in Chinese. I passed my first major test as China tour guide (didn't even lose anyone along the way!), and am ready for more visitors! (hint hint!)

I must admit, though, they wore me out! So the week after they went home was mostly one of rest. This past week I've tried to get back into the

normal routines of life, of time with Him, and of study. I still have plenty to catch up on. And now it is May and I have only about 6 weeks left until I come home for a short visit! While I'm very excited, it is also a bit overwhelming as there is much to be done in that time! Besides study, I have to help all of the students arrange their Language Assessments and then meet with them afterwards. There are various other meetings and responsibilities, arrangements for next semester (probably some new tasks to take over), and many farewells (as friends leave on home assignment) that will also have to be done before I leave, so I would appreciate your prayers for strength, wisdom, and rest in the midst of busy-ness over the next several weeks.

Thank you so much for your continued thoughts on my behalf. You are also such a blessing to me!

Grace and peace,
Kim

A.S.A.P.

Ever wonder about the abbreviation asap?

Generally, we think of it in terms of even more hurry and stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of this abbreviation in a different manner, we will begin to find a new way to deal with those rough days along the way.

There's work to do, deadlines to meet;
You've got no time to spare,

Father to supply what is needed so that I can come home this summer.

- Study: Please join me in lifting up all those
- struggling to learn the language of the people the Father has called us to.
- That I not neglect to daily seek His face.

But as you hurry and scurry—

A.S.A.P. – ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

In the midst of family chaos, “quality time” is rare.

Do your best

Let God do the rest

A.S.A.P. – ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

It may seem like your worries

Are more than you can bear.

Slow down and take a breather –

A.S.A.P. – ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

God knows how stressful life is;

He wants to ease our cares,

And He'll respond to all your needs –

A.S.A.P. – ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

Camp Shalom

OUR NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR FOR THE summer program is Adrien Stelpstra as Marijke Strong has stepped down after many years so that she can further her studies.

We are hoping that all youngsters who wanted to go to camp this summer have registered. Camp is still looking for more kitchen volunteers for a week. Very likely they now have a head cook hired but still may be looking for a nurse. Volunteers are always welcome either to work with the children or on maintenance.

The Annual Fun Fair at Countryside Camp

Celebrating 40 years of ministry to be held September 19, 2009 from 10 am – 4 pm. Admission: canned food item.

This will be the 32nd Annual Fun Fair and the theme for this year will be “Celebrating 40 Years of Ministry at Camp Shalom!”

The 2nd annual Walk ‘n Roll Fundraiser was held on the 23rd of May and there was some participation from our church. If any of you would still like to do the original ride to Camp on the day of the Fun Fair, you should get in contact with Klaas Slagter at 905-690-0970.

Auctions

Cake: The highlight of the day, around 2:30 pm each of the cakes entered and judged in the decorating contest will be auctioned off. Join in the fun; ask your friends to pitch in and bid for the congregation. Truly a lot of fun!

Silent Auction: Once again a large tent will be packed with new items for you and your friends to place bids.

Large Items: If you or a business in the area would like to donate a new item valued at more than \$150, it will be placed in this auction, sample items would be a propane bbq, Adirondack chairs, etc.

Tournaments

Soccer Teams will be co-ed and consist of six players with the minimum age of the players

being 14 years. Also, each team is required to have a female player on the field throughout the game. I have the registration form and the fee remains the same at \$10/player; full payment is due with the registration form by September 8, 2009.

Bocce Teams will consist of four players with the minimum age of 14 years. I have the registration forms and the fee remains the same at \$10/player. Full payment is due with the registration form by September 8, 2009.

Dollar Store

Please, smaller items only: dishes, clocks, toys, puzzles, dolls, working appliances, skates. No books, no clothes, no shoes, no junk, please! These items need to be at camp by September 12, 2009.

Individual Opportunities

Produce: Grow your own and bring extra to the Fair - herbs, flowers, fruit.

Baking: If all ladies and gentlemen could bring at least three items for the Country Kitchen, that would be nice. You could bake at home or get together and bake at church. The home baking is a terrific fundraiser, not to mention a delight for our taste buds. Ladies and gentlemen are also asked to come to Camp for a day to bake for the tearoom. Please notify Camp when you intend to come: Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of the week of the Fair.

Grab Bag Prizes: Prizes needed for the children. Please mark for girl or boy.

Cake Decorating Contest: Anyone is given the opportunity to be creative: bake and decorate a cake based on the theme, “Celebrating 40 Years of Ministry at Camp Shalom!” These cakes are to be decorated with all edible items and no larger than 20” x 30”. They will be judged the day of the Fair, prior to the afternoon Auction.

Be sure to come out for a day of socializing and fun. Good food and lots of things to do. Do not forget to bring your canned food item!

Ricki Bleijerveld

Our Church Family

The Bykers... Ken and Wendy

KEN WAS BORN IN Steenwyz, the Netherlands, in 1920. Wendy in Paaslo, the Netherlands, in 1921. They married in 1945 when world war two ended.

Ken tells of the experiences he went through when he was picked up by the Germans who occupied Holland. He was sent to a concentration camp in Amhersfoort and then deported to Germany where he worked with 80 other boys, some Russians and some from Poland. He first worked as a gravel mover and later worked on a farm.

The ones who stayed behind had no clue of the whereabouts of the ones who were captured. Through a friend, a piece of paper with information about Ken's whereabouts was passed on so that, eventually, Wendy learned where Ken was, with the happy news that Ken was alive and well.

Six years after the way, they emigrated to Canada with two children, Eelko, four years old, and Aukje, four months old. They started out in Drayton. Wendy said it wasn't always easy; they didn't speak the language but, with the help of their

young children, it was almost like homeschooling. Later they moved to Mount Forest where they shared a house with Indians. No hydro. No water. The Indian men did now their moonshine. The Indian woman taught Wendy how to bake bread. According to Ken she learned to be the best breadmaker from scratch ever born. For a period of time, they ate pancakes three times a day... you can imagine that bread baking was a blessing.

They moved and worked for a farmer for three years, "with water and hydro," Ken laughs. Eventually they bought their own farm with one cow and a tractor; this increased rapidly to 20 cows. Ken worked in Elmira in a shoe factory. Wendy took care of the cattle and milked them by hand and later on with machinery. In approximately five years they extended their farm and bought chickens and raised them to be sold under contract. The buyer

went belly-up and Wendy and Ken took the loss. "I survived," Ken says. They decided to pack it in as a farmer. He wanted a steady income and worked at Stelco for 21 years. At this time they moved to Hamilton and attended the Reformed church there.

Thirteen years later, Ken retired and moved to Grimsby, attended Stoney Creek Reformed Church. After being informed about Martindale Place being built, they signed up and lived there for 15 years attending First Reformed in St. Catharines. The Buykers felt that they should move back to Grimsby where Wendy gets full care at Shalom Manor. They both spoke highly of the care given to them by the staff and the excellent food prepared for them (beats pancakes anytime). Wendy's health deteriorated; she has trouble with her lungs. They still walk every day hand in hand, still in love after 64 years of marriage. They stroll on the sidewalks around Shalom Manor. Ken still bowls and he loves it. His average is great for an 88 year young man. "I love it and it is good exercise," he explained. They have seven grandchildren, ten great grandchildren and one great, great grandchild. "We love the Lord with all our hearts and are thankful for all things given to us, great and small.

Reporter: Bill VanDyk



Mrs. Anna Rynberk

ANNA HAS RESIDED IN Shalom Gardens for the past eight months. It was quite an adjustment but she overcame her discomfort of moving from Martindale Place where her husband, John and she lived since 1991. John moved to Shalom Manor first at age 89. He suffered from Alzheimer's disease. In March of 2008 he went to glory. Anna was born in 1924 in Ymuiden, the Netherlands, met John Rynberk in 1943 and married in 1944. Anna says, "John is the one the Lord picked out for me." John was in the Dutch

army and had to go "underground" periodically to avoid being sent by the Nazis to fight in Germany. It was a frightening time but the Lord took care of them. In 1951 the Rynberks emigrated to Canada arriving in Fonthill with their

eldest two children, Huibert and Hendrika. John eventually landed a job with Stelco. They moved to several places, including Dain City and Wainfleet, eventually settling in Port Colborne before moving to Martindale Place. Their younger children, Fya and Jan, were born in Canada. Anna has 12 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Anna passes on a few tips for younger couples: (a) you forgive—and you forget; (b) you never go to bed angry; (c) make sure you attend church; (d) pray and do your daily devotions.

Reporter: Bill VanDyk



Mr. Andries Rynberk

IF YOU ARE VISITING someone in Shalom Manor, you will see Andries walking the halls and, with the improvement of the weather, you can find him in the gardens enjoying the sunshine, flowers and the company of friends. Andries is still very mobile, although suffers with arthritis in his neck. His walker holds papers and a jar of jam. He loves his jam. That's because he was born close to the city Tiel, place of the biggest jam factory in the Netherlands.

He shares the good times the Lord has given him for over 90 years, adding that it was not always a smooth road but

his faith carried him through. Andries is looking forward to being reunited with his wife, Maaïke, who passed away in 2005.

Andries and Maaïke were married in 1941. In 1955 they decided to emigrate to Canada

with their two children, Chris and John. Their third child, Nellie was born in Canada. They arrived in Welland where his brother John and sister-in-law Anna, resided.

For 30 years Andries was employed as a tool and die maker by "Generous Motors" in St. Catharines. They attended First Reformed Church in St. Catharines almost from the beginning. Rev. Anton Schermer was the pastor in 1955. After Martindale Place was built, Andries and Maaïke decided to move to an easier lifestyle. After many years of enjoyment in Martindale Place they decided to move to

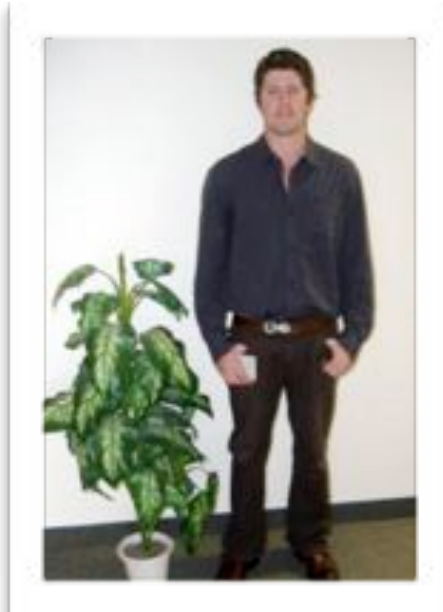


continued on page 9

New Members by Confession of Faith, in April, 2009



Ashley Moes



Tim Moes



BethAnn VanSlageren

The Joy of Living

WHEN ASHLEY AND BETHANN were youngsters in Sunday School, they were teasing Ken Peacock, their teacher at the time, calling him silly names and laughing. They said things like “you’re a diaper head” and “you’re a pickle. Well, Ken replied, “hey, that’s Mr. Pickle to you”, and they laughed and laughed. The nick name stuck, and from that time on, Ken is known to young and old alike as “Mr. Pickle”.

Shalom Manor with their advanced years and declining health where they could receive full care.

Andries shared that he is content and happy at Shalom Manor.

He has seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Reporter: Bill VanDyk

To welcome each day for the challenge it holds,
To delight in the beauty each flower unfolds,
To do every task as well as we can,
To reach out in friendship to our fellow man –
This is the joy of living.

To treasure the rainbow more highly than gold,
To keep growing and learning, but never grow old,
To smile through the times when the journey seems hard,
To find true contentment in our own backyard –
This is the joy of living.

To savour each memory and keep dreaming anew,
To always believe in the good and the true,
To love and to live as we travel life’s way,
And to live to the fullest each hour of today –
This is the joy of living.



OPA, HOW DO YOU SPELL THIS????

Braden helping Opa change the Church sign. Braden van Slageren, 4 year old son of Brenda and Mel.

For a Chuckle:

THE YOUNG PASTOR BEGAN HIS SERMON, "I have taken for my text the words, 'And they fed the five men with 5,000 loaves of bread and 2,000 fishes.'"

At this obvious misquotation, an old parishioner said audibly, "That's no miracle—I could do that myself!"

The embarrassed pastor said nothing, but the next Sunday he announced the same text. This time, however, he got it right. He waited a moment and then, leaning over the pulpit and looking at the parishioner, asked, "And could you do that, too, Mr. Bailey?"

"Of course I could," Bailey replied.

"And just how would you do it?" the pastor asked.

"With the leftovers from last Sunday," Bailey replied.

WAITING IN SILENCE

James 1: 2-4

My soul waits in silence for God only." (Psalm 62:1) . Some of the best times in prayer are wordless times. I stop speaking, close my eyes, and meditate upon what I have been reading or upon what I have been saying, and I listen inside of myself. I listen deeply. I listen for reproofs. I think of myself as a home with many doors. As I am meditating--and often it helps to close my eyes so I won't be distracted--I unlock doors and open them as I wait. It is here that the Holy Spirit invades. Then I take circumstances before Him and I listen with doors open.

Please be assured that I have never heard an audible voice. It isn't that kind of answering. It's a listening down inside. It's sensing what God is saying about the situation. His promise is, after all, that He will inscribe His law --His will-- upon our hearts and our minds.

It's like what you do when you're in love with a person. Isn't it true--the deeper the love, the less

that has to be said? You can actually sit alone together by a fireplace for an hour or two and say very, very little, but it can be the deepest encounter and relationship you know anything about.

Those who wait upon the Lord will gain new strength according to Isaiah, but remember the key is waiting.

There's a sense of stability in trusting the Lord. That's how we wait silently and with a sense of confidence. When we wait for God to direct our steps, He does! When we trust Him to meet our needs, He will!

God tempers us and seasons us, making us mellow and mature when we wait on Him.

gleaned from DAY BY DAY WITH CHARLES SWINDOLL

submitted by Valerie vanHartingsveldt

Willy is hoping that Marie will be coming here soon and he would like people to know more about him and her. This is a letter Willy wrote a while ago, and was published in the In Touch at that time.

A letter from Willy

ONE MORE OPPORTUNE moment has come when I face you again across a few lines of text to express my deep gratitude towards my Christian family. First and foremost I thank Almighty God for fulfilling his promises for my life through the fraternity of this benevolent congregation.

Nothing comes by pointless chance for I am reassured by my faith that it is the will of God that is being fulfilled. Certain obstacles, here and there, never stopped me from overcoming. I could have never imagined that in a matter of two and half years in Canada, I would qualify with a university degree..... It looks like a dream but it is true. The congregational support was not put in a dry ground. I could not imagine that my brothers and sister in the Congo would have attended school and be justified to dream of going to university. I hereby then present my deep gratitude towards the church youth who made the dreams come true for my brethren in Congo. Let me inform you that education in Congo is a privilage not a right as the case is in Canada. Hence my family looked differently from other families which can not send the children to school. It is then a pride for my family thanks to your support.

Your support is making a difference in their life. All my family in Congo is blessed for you having me among you.

And I have another divine blessing of my life which I call a life partner and she reciprocates by calling me a cherished husband.... marriage the christian doctrine. I present my gratitude to all my friends who kindly accepted to make this happen in such a short period of time. My beloved wife is called MARIE NGOJ. Mary is a tailor by profession as she has a three year university degree. Many people speculate on how I managed to return to Congo and find a wife in such limited period of time. I simply understand that it is due to the cultural particulourism for in Congo it is enough to have good will and share a mutual appreciation of each other family is reputation. Mary, my wife is not a complete stranger to me for I knew her since childhood. We attended the same school though in different levels. We attended the same church and belonged to the same church youth grouping. I maintained relations with Mary's brothers as she maintained relations with my sister. I am acquainted with her family as she is acquainted with mine. One thing is there was not love story between her and me. But more important in our culture is the solemn contemplation about being tied in a marriage link.

When the tragic events in Congo drove me to refugee camps and later into Canada, I never stopped wondering about the girl who deserves to be my wife. The cultural approach is to first

investigate through a friend on the behaviour of a certain number of girls a person who is abroad knew when he was in the country. That was my case, I gave a certain number of girls names I knew among which Mary's was. Both my family and friends appreciated Mary's behaviour. It is not enough to look beautiful, have an education to be marriageable, there are still some criteria to which a girl has to respond in order to qualify.

Once Mary's eligibility was confirmed, I then phoned her to propose marriage across the dividing distance of thousands of miles overarching the mighty Atlantic Ocean. She was so shocked to hear that news which she considered "good and bad". "Good" because it is an honour and a family pride to be married for a girl. "Bad" because she was considering me like almost a brother because of my relationship with her brothers. After two months of reflection she sent me a couple pages of questions to know my expectation in the relationship. Thank God she was not totally out of my expectation in her questions. The purpose of those questions was to find out if I was still Willy she knew years ago. So my answers went in the same way with her thought.

In spite of our mutual agreement, the battle was far from being won. Mary's parents even though they knew me years ago, they still had doubt on my status after so many years spent out of the country. Thanks to both my friend and my family who are in the Congo for the hard work they did in Mary's family to convince them

continued on page 12

on my behalf. "Marriage in my culture is not a couple's issue only but it involves both families." Families have right to suggestion and final decision belongs to the bride and the groom.

For the marriage to be effective there are three steps that have to be fulfilled:

- 1) Customary marriage which consists of bringing the two families together "dowry".
- 2) Civil wedding which consists of signing legal document at the City Hall. These above types of marriage were done last June. Once more thank you to all who supported me. The final was not done due to the financial problem. It is the Christian wedding.

To my beloved brothers and sister in Christ, all this accomplishment would not have effect without your moral, material and spiritual support. Since June 29, 2007, Mary is legally my wife by law, and is living with my family

in the Congo while waiting for the Congo government to deliver the paper work. As you know bureaucracy is always problem everywhere. I'm sure you can imagine how hard it can be for a country like Congo today. If she receives those paper works from Congo, she will have to send them to me. From there I start the sponsorship with the Canadian government. I am not sure when the paper works will be here. Please I need your prayers. As I think you are trying to think how tough it can be on both of us.

You are not forgotten all those who take time to give me opportunities to hear my beloved wife's voice.

To my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, all these accomplishment would not have effect without your spiritual, moral and material support.

Sorry for the delay. God bless you.

Willy



Sunday after church, a Mom asked her very young daughter what the lesson was about. The daughter answered, 'Don't be scared, you'll get your quilt.' Needless to say, the Mom was perplexed. Later in the day, the pastor stopped by for tea and the Mom asked him what that morning's Sunday school lesson was about. He said, 'Be not afraid, the Comforter is coming.'

A Better Sermon

I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.

The eye's a better pupil and more willing than the ear;

Fine counsel is confusing but example's always clear;

And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creed,

For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done.

I can watch your hand in action, but your tongue too fast may run,

And the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;

But I'd rather get me lesson by observing what you do,

For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,

But there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

Harold T. Johnson





June

- 07 Jonathan VanDyk
Emily Crowley
- 08 Mrs. Cathy Kok**
- 09 Mr. Paul Koole
- 12 Mr. Simon de Haan
Mrs. Betty Knight
Adam Fretz
Mr. Alex VanderMeulen
- 13 Mrs. Alie VanOjen
- 15 Jerry Moes, Jr.
- 18 Daniel Maracle
- 19 Breaden Dyck
- 21 Mrs. Janet deGroot
Mr. Mark Valstar
- 25 Mrs. Anna Boers
Mr. Paul visser
- 26 Mrs. Effie Wassenaar
- 27 Mr. John Smit
Mrs. Claudia Poirier
Mr. John Schonewille
- 29 Mr. David Schalk
- 30 Mr. Case Nauta

JULY

- 01 Mrs. Grace Fisher**
Marianne VanderMeulen
Nicholas VanDyk
- 02 Mr. Jake Labrie**
Mr. Henk Schonewille
- 03 Brittany Schonewille
- 04 David Hough
Mr. Jerry Moes Sr.
- 06 Danielle Broekema
- 07 Mrs. Mini Terhorst**

- Mrs. Jeanette Frazer
- 08 Mr. Bill Veenhof
Bethann VanSlageren
- 10 Mrs. Debbie Sheppard
- 11 Mr. Darren Veld
- 12 Mrs. Margaret Moes
Brett Radsma
- 13 Mrs. Jolanda Broekema
- 15 Ryan Daniel
- 17 Mrs. Jane Vanderlee
Justine Dyck
- 20 Ms. Darlene Pay
Kyle Irving
- 21 Miss Adriana Vink**
- 23 Mr. Robert Moes
- 25 Rev. Art VanSlageren
- 29 Mr. Jason Irving
Cody Brenneman

AUGUST

- 01 Bradley Snoei
- 02 Mr. Bill Huyzers
Katelyn Easby
- 03 Mrs. Yolanda Koole
- 05 Mrs. Evelyn Moes
- 07 Mrs. Gerda VanDyk
Mrs. Jeanette Etherington
- 07 Sean Frazer
- 08 Tyler Etherington
- 09 Mrs. Ann Vanderlee
- 10 Jessica Botbyl
Brennan Crowley
- 14 Mr. Khem Ablack
- 15 Mrs. Gail Pagee
Chadd Hunter
- 18 Mrs. Krina Bos**
- 20 Mrs. Magda Witte
- 24 Mr. Robert Adams
- 27 Mrs. Joan Smit**
- 28 Mrs. Allison VanSlageren
- 31 Mr. Harry deMol

SEPTEMBER

- 04 Zachary Snoei
- 07 Mr. Ralph Vanderlee
- 08 Mrs. Lynn Veld
- 10 Mr. Ken Peacock
- 11 Mr Fred VanderMeulen
- 12 Aaron VanSlageren
- 14 Mrs. Nel Blom
Mrs. Ann Kryger
Mrs. Peggy Irving

- 16 Mrs. Mennie Buitenwerf
Mr. Herb Sheppard
- 17 Mr. Richard Wubs
- 18 Mrs. Nel Grootveld
Mr. Peter Visser
Mr. Dave Vanderlee
Jeff Sheppard
- 20 Mrs Caroline Wubs
- 23 Jenny Wubs
- 24 Mrs. Wendy Byker**
- 27 Mr. Leo Nauta
Miss Alison
VanHartingsveldt
- 30 Mrs. Mary Snoei

OCTOBER

- 01 Mrs. Corrie Vellekoop
Mr. Peter Vanderlee
Mrs. Charissa Laarman
Sarah Dyck
- 02 Mr. Dick Kok
Mr. Henk Huurman
- 03 Mrs. Debbie McLean
- 04 Mr. Harry Moes
Gloria Botbyl
- 07 Mrs. Dolores Bouw
Mrs. Nel Botbyl
Mr. John Moretton
- 09 Mrs. Trudy Labrie**
Robert Hough
- 10 Mr. Henk VanAtte
Campbell Veld
- 13 Mr. Marinus Bos**
Mrs. Ann Vanderhorn
- 15 Olivia Prudhomme
- 16 Mr. John VanDuren
Mr. Bill Brestvan Kempen

** indicates that this person has reached the age of 80 years. A special congratulations to you! If your birthday does not appear on this list, please accept our apologies and our birthday congratulations and call Wendy DeHaan at 905 937 1867. so that your name can be added to our list.

As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God.

MISSIONARIES, NOT AID

money, are the solution to Africa's biggest problem – the crushing passivity of the people's mindset

Before Christmas I returned, after 45 years, to the country that as a boy I knew as Nyasaland. Today it's Malawi, and The Times Christmas Appeal includes a small British charity working here. Pump Aid helps rural communities to install a simple pump, letting people keep their village wells sealed and clean. I went to see this work.

It inspired me, renewing my flagging faith in development charities. But travelling in Malawi refreshed another belief, too: one I've been trying to banish all my life, but an observation I've been unable to avoid since my African childhood. It confounds my ideological beliefs, stubbornly refuses to fit my world view and has embarrassed my growing belief that there is no God.

Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa, Christianity changes people's hearts, it brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good.

I used to avoid this truth by applauding – as you can – the practical work of mission churches in Africa. It's a pity, I would say,

that salvation is part of the package, but Christians black and white, working Africa, do heal the sick, do teach people to read and write; and only the severest kind of secularist could see a mission hospital or school and say the world would be better without it. I would allow that, if faith was needed to motivate missionaries to help, then, fine; but what counted was the help, not the faith.

But this doesn't fit the facts. Faith does more than support the missionary; it is also transferred to his flock. This is the effect that matters so immensely, and which I cannot help observing.

First, then, the observation. We had friends who were missionaries, and as a child I stayed often with them; I also stayed alone with my little brother in a traditional rural African village. In the city we had working for us Africans who had converted and were strong believers. The Christians were always different. Far from having cowed or confined its converts, their faith appeared to have liberated and relaxed them. There was a liveliness, a curiosity, an engagement with the world – a directness in their dealing with others – that seemed to be missing in traditional African life. They stood tall.

At 24, travelling by land across the continent reinforced this impression. From Algiers to Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and the Central African Republic, then right through the Congo to Rwanda, Tanzania and Kenya, four student friends and I drove our old Land Rover to Nairobi.

We slept under the stars, so it was important as we reached the more populated and lawless parts of the sub-Saharan that every day we find somewhere safe by nightfall. Often near a mission.

Whenever we entered a territory worked by missionaries, we had to acknowledge that something changed in the faces of the people we passed and spoke to: something in their eyes, the way they approached you: direct, man-to-man, without looking down or away. They had not become more deferential towards strangers – in some ways less so – but more open.

This time in Maiawi it was the same. I met no missionaries. You do not encounter missionaries in the lobbies of expensive hotels discussing development strategy documents, as you do with the big NGOs. But instead I noticed that a handful of the most impressive African members of the Pump Aid team (largely from Zimbabwe) were, privately, strong Christians. "Privately" because the charity is entirely secular and I never heard any of its team so much as mention religion while working in the villages. But I picked up the Christian references in our conversations. One, I saw, was studying a devotional textbook in the car. One, on Sunday, went off to church at dawn for a two-hour service.

It would suit me to believe that their honest, diligence and optimism in their work was unconnected with personal faith. Their work was secular, but surely affected by what they were. What they were was, in turn, influenced by a conception of man's place in the

continued on page 15

Universe that Christianity had taught.

There's long been a fashion among Western academic sociologists for placing tribal value systems within a ring fence, beyond critiques founded in our own culture: "theirs" and therefore best for "them;" authentic and of intrinsically equal worth to ours.

I don't follow this. I observe that tribal belief is no more peaceable than ours; and that it suppresses individuality. People think collectively; first in terms of the community, extended family and tribe. This rural-traditional mindset feeds into the "big man" and gangster politics of the African city: they exaggerated respect for a swaggering leader, and the (literal) inability to understand the whole idea of loyal opposition.

Anxiety – fear of evil spirits, of ancestors, of nature and the wild, of a tribal hierarchy, of quite everyday things – strikes deep into the whole structure of rural African thought. Every man

has his place and, call it fear or respect, a great weight grinds down the individual spirit, stunting curiosity. People won't take the initiative, won't take things into their own hands or on their own shoulders.

How can I, as someone with a foot in both camps, explain? When the philosophical tourist moves from one world view to another he finds – at the very moment of passing into the new – that he loses the language to describe the landscape of the old. But let me try an example: the answer given by Sir Edmund Hillary to the question: Why climb the mountain? "Because it's there," he said.

To the rural African mind, this is an explanation of why one would not climb the mountain. It's... well, there. Just there. Why interfere? Nothing to be done about it, or with it. Hillary's further explanation – that nobody else had climbed it – would stand as a second reason for passivity.

Christianity, post-Reformation and post-Luther,

with its teaching of a direct, personal, two-way link between the individual and God, unmediated by the collective, and unsubordinate to any other human being, smashes straight through the philosophical/spiritual framework I've just described. It offers something to hold on to to those anxious to cast off a crushing tribal groupthink. That is why and how it liberates.

Those who want Africa to walk tall amid 21st century global competition must no kid themselves that providing the material means or even the knowhow that accompanies what we call development will make the change. A whole belief system must first be supplanted.

And I'm afraid it has to be supplanted by another. Removing Christian evangelism from the African equation may leave the continent at the mercy of a malign fusion of Nike, the witch doctor, the mobile phone and the machete.

Matthew Parris, The Times (UK newspaper), December 27, 2008

DID YOU KNOW?

“FIREPROOF YOUR MARRIAGE”

Yes! There is a bible study for married couples at the church on Wednesday nights at 8:30. We decided to attend the first night, and what an eye-opener! We thought afterwards that we wished that there was a study like this when we were first married or even after only a few years had passed. The first thing we learned at the Bible study was that God created both of us, male and female; He brought us together to love each other. What an amazing gift! We are each other's friend, each other's spouse, each other's everything! How easily we forget this gift which has been given to

us by the Lord. How quickly we begin to take each other for granted. Why do we do this? It is easy to just get into a rut. Do we just become lazy and complacent?

A study like this helps us to see things differently. It helps us to remember the gift we have been given. It is wonderful to learn to love your spouse all over again. To understand how important it is to respect and listen and talk to each other with love and laughter. You can learn to have a good time together again! Life is very short and time flies by! I would strongly advise every young couple in the church to make it out for this Bible study and make your marriage much happier.

Lovingly submitted by Mrs. G. Moes

BE GRACIOUS

2 Peter 3:18

Paus deals with the value of being gracious in your Christian walk in 1 Thessalonians 2:7-11: : But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us. For you recall, brethren, our labour and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and so is God, now devoutly and uprightly and blamelessly we behaved toward you believers: just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children." What a gracious, tolerant spirit! The man was both approachable and tender. Did you notice the word pictures? He cared for others "as a nursing mother" and dealt with them in their needs "as a father." He had compassion. Of high priority to this capable, brilliant man of God was a gracious, compassionate attitude.

If there is one specific criticism we hear against our evangelical "camp" more than any other, it is this: We lack compassion. We are more abrasive and judgmental than thoughtful, tactful, compassionate, and tolerant. If we're not careful, we tend to use people rather than love them, dont we? We try to change them and later help them, rather than accept them as they are.

Our world of hungry, hurting humanity longs for and deserves the message of truth presented in attractive, gentle, gracious wrappings. Dont forget: "as a mother...as a father."

People are for more important than rigid rules and demanding expectations.

gleaned from DAY TO DAY WITH CHARLES SWINDOLL

A QUIET TIME

When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:6

Keeping accounts is tempting. We want to remember all the details of how we've been wronged. And we certainly don't want to forgive. But that becomes tricky when we realize we ourselves need forgiveness from God. The Lord offers us solutions to both forgiving and being forgiven. But He asks that we go to a private place to confront the issues head-on: go into your room...pray in secret.

Get alone with God. Pray for the Lord to reveal to you any attitudes or actions that have displeased Him. Write them down, regardless how long the list. Then write 1 John 1:9 across the top of the page: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Tear up the list and throw it away. Thank God for forgiving your sins. Your reward: the truth and reality of forgiveness will set you free.

If you still feel unforgiven, consider the price God paid through Christ's death. You might want to say, "On the basis of the cross, I accept God's forgiveness, and I therefore forgive myself." When memories nag realize that the Enemy would rather keep you bound than free. Then ask yourself if there is anything you can't forgive someone. List the institutions or people who have hurt you, have made you angry, have denied your rights, or have not met your expectations. Be specific. "I forgive----- for -----."

Choose not hold them responsible for your well-being or happiness. Cancel the debt. Deal with anger by acknowledging it. Let God help to absorb the loss. then consider what you might gain, and list your gains.

Father is heaven, help me to face the painful events in my life, so acknowledge the hurt, and to seek forgiveness from you. Thank you that you readily forgive and heal.

gleaned from MORE PRECIOUS THAN SILVER by Joni Eareckson Tada

FINISHING WELL

1 Corinthians 3: 10-14

One of the great doctrines of Christianity is our belief in a heavenly home. Ultimately, we shall spend eternity with God in the place He has prepared for us. And part of that exciting anticipation is His promise to reward His servants for a job well done.

Most rewards are received in heaven, not on earth. God reserves special honour for that day when "each man's work will become evident: and "he shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3: 13-14)

All rewards are based on quality, not quantity. God's eye is always on motive.

No reward that is postponed will be forgotten. When that day in eternity dawns, no act of serving others--be it well-known or unknown to others--will be forgotten.

Someone once counted all the promises in the Bible and came up with an amazing figure of almost 7500. Among that large number are some specific promises servants can claim today.

When we did what was right, with the right motive, but received no credit, no acknowledgement, not even a 'thank you'.....we have God's promise that "we shall reap."

When any servant has served and given and sacrificed and then willingly stepped aside for God to receive the glory, our heavenly Father promises he will receive back.

And then there are the eternal rewards. Some of them are referred to as "crowns" that are being set aside for God's servants. The Bible speaks of at least five crowns.

The imperishable crown (1Cor. 9:24-27), awarded to those believers who constantly bring the flesh under the Holy Spirit's control.

The crown of exultation (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2: 19-20), distributed to those servants who are faithful to declare the gospel.

The crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7-8), awarded to those who live each day with eternity's values in view.

The crown of life (James 1:12), promised to those who endure trials, loving the Saviour all the way.

The crown of glory (1 Peter 5:1-4), promised to those who faithfully "shepherd the flock."

What a scene! All God's servants before His throne. They are bowing in worship, having cast all crowns before their Lord in adoration and praise, ascribing worth and honour to the only One deserving of praise--the Lord God!

God alone is perfectly and consistently just. We forget; God remembers. We see an action; God sees a motive. This qualifies Him as the best recordkeeper and judge.

*gleaned from DAY BY DAY WITH CHARLES
SWINDOLL*

submitted by Valerie vanHartingsveldt

He is God

He is the First and Last,
The Beginning and the End!

He is the keeper of Creation
and the Creator of all!
He is the Architect of the
universe and the Manager of all
times.

He always was, He always is, and
He always will be ...
unmoved, Unchanged,
Undefeated, and never Undone!

He was bruised and brought
healing!
He was pierced and eased pain!
He was persecuted and brought
freedom!
He was dead and brought life!
He is risen and brings power!
He reigns and brings Peace!
The world can't understand him,
The armies can't defeat Him,
The schools can't explain Him,
and The leaders can't ignore
Him.

Herod couldn't kill Him, The
Pharisees couldn't confuse Him,
and The people couldn't hold
Him!

Nero couldn't crush Him, Hitler
couldn't silence Him,
The New Age can't replace
Him, and "Oprah" can't explain
Him away!

He is light, love, longevity, and
Lord.
He is goodness, Kindness,
Gentleness, and God.
He is Holy, Righteous, mighty,
powerful, and pure.

His ways are right,
His word is eternal,
His will is unchanging, and His
mind is on me.
He is my Savior,
He is my guide, and He is my
peace!
He is my Joy,
He is my comfort,
He is my Lord, and He rules my
life!

I serve Him because His bond
is love,
His burden is light, and His goal
for me is abundant life.

I follow Him because He is the
wisdom of the wise,
the power of the powerful,
the ancient of days, the ruler of
rulers, the leader of leaders, the
overseer of the overcomers, and
is to come. And if that seems
impressive to you, try this for
size.

His goal is a relationship with
ME!
He will never leave me,
never forsake me,
never mislead me,
never forget me,
never overlook me and
never cancel my appointment in
His appointment book!

When I fall, He lifts me up!
When I fail, He forgives!
When I am weak, He is strong!
When I am lost, He is the way!
When I am afraid, He is my
courage!

When I stumble, He steadies
me!
When I am hurt, He heals me!
When I am broken, He mends
me!
When I am blind, He leads me!
When I am hungry, He feeds
me!
When I face trials, He is with
me!
When I face persecution, He
shields me!
When I face problems, He
comforts me!
When I face loss, He provides
for me!
When I face Death, He carries
me Home!

He is everything for everybody
everywhere, every time, and
every way.

He is God, He is faithful. I am
His, and He is mine!

My Father in heaven can whip
the father of this world.
So, if you're wondering why I
feel so secure, understand this...

He said it and that settles it.
God is in control, I am on His
side,
and that means all is well with
my soul.

Everyday is a blessing for GOD
Is!