



THE *Good News* LETTER

FROM THE PASTOR

Happy New Year!

What?! Has the Interim Pastor flipped an extra page on his calendar? Or has he just “flipped”? Not at all.

As November flows into December, we enter the season of Advent, making the start of a new year on the Christian liturgical calendar. So “Happy New Years” is quite timely.

Advent, as we know, is more than just the four weeks prior to Christmas. It’s a time of “sacred waiting” and preparation which culminates in the birth of the Savior, Jesus, and anticipates His promised return. This year, however, the season takes an added significance as we also wait and prepare for the coming of Fort Square’s next Installed Pastor. Seen from this perspective, the entire interim period can be viewed as an extended Advent.

Now, waiting, we must admit, is no one’s favorite thing to do. Yet, it’s a necessary and important part of everyone’s life. We wait: for flights to arrive, for vacation to start, for babies to be born. We wait for the weather to clear, sometimes for sermons to end (!), or for a friend to call. We may wait for an expected promotion, for the results of medical tests, or for a

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Mission Study Complete—What’s Next?

The completion of the Mission Study and the approval of the report by the Presbytery of Boston’s Committee on Ministry (COM) is a significant milestone in the ongoing process of finding a new permanent pastor for our congregation. The Mission Study will be used for many purposes. It is the basis for information that the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) will use to complete the Church Information Form (CIF). The CIF is entered into the central database of the Presbyterian Church and is the initial document that prospective pastoral candidates will use to determine if they have an interest in Fort Square. Potential candidates will be given a copy of the report to familiarize them further with Fort Square.

The Mission Study report was not created solely for the purpose of finding a new pastor; it is a document developed by the congregation of Fort Square to provide the Session with guidance as to the direction of the



church over the coming years. The Session will spend time discussing the report and reviewing direction and programs in light of its findings. The Mission Study Committee is charged with meeting with

the Session in six months and reporting back to the congregation on progress to date. While many of the changes Fort Square must make in the coming years will require the assistance of a new pastor, Session can begin the review and analysis work required to help the new pastor and the

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Contemporary Worship Leader:
Jeine Kamberidis
Youth Minister: Jon Wilson
Sexton: Bob Perch
Worship Schedule
8:30 am Contemporary Worship
11:00 am Traditional Worship



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*Mission Study
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church improve the ministry of the congregation at Fort Square.

The Mission Study will be made available to the congregation in three ways:

1. Downloadable as a PDF from the church Web site;
2. Available on a CD as requested (the document file size is too large to email);
3. Available in print in the church library.

The church is not providing written copies for all members due to the cost involved. The report is approximately 130 pages, and the estimate received for printing 20 color copies was more than \$1,000 (color is necessary to read the report's many graphs). Announcements will be placed in the church bulletin when the report is ready on the church Web site or for signing up for a CD version.

What's Next on the Agenda?

Now that COM has approved the report, the congregation can establish a Pastoral Nominating Committee. This is a committee of the congregation and voted by the members of Fort Square to find and present to the membership a candidate to be the next pastor. The committee will work with both the Session and the COM, but the responsibility and authority to find and present the candidate rests with this committee. The Session has appointed the current church nominating committee to present to the congre-

gation a slate of 11 candidates for the position of member of the PNC.

Once the slate is complete, the Session will call for a congregational meeting. At this meeting, additional candidates can be nominated by members of the congregation. The nominating committee has established a process for this (which can be found in the church narthex). Once all nominations have been made, a ballot election will be held with the top eleven people being elected to the committee. Be in prayer for our members and the nominating committee as they go about this task.

Thanks abound to many for the success of the Mission Study project, but special thanks goes to those on the committee, Peggy Macleod, Donna Donovan, Randy Nielsen, Debbie Simpson, Michele Wilbur, and Danielle Baker.

Their willingness to spend hours in meetings planning, reviewing, consolidating information led to a successful completion of the study. Special thanks also to Leann Davis Alspaugh for the numerous changes and updates given to her in an attempt to make the report presentable. May the Lord bless our church and give us the direction needed to find the person He has selected to minister here at Fort Square.

—Walter Baker, Jr.,
Chair of Mission Study Committee

Session Responds to Case 08-01

Editor's Note: In August, the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) of the Presbytery of Boston issued a Decision and Order (Case 08-01) regarding a disciplinary case against Jean K. Southard, a Minister of Word and Sacrament and an Honorably Retired member of the Presbytery of Boston. The charges stated that Rev. Southard violated the Constitution by appropriating liturgical forms for Christian marriage to celebrate the marriage two women. Further, that by performing this ceremony, Rev. Southard failed to fulfill her ordination vow to be governed by church polity. Neither charge was sustained and a Dissenting Opinion was issued by Margaret MacLeod and R. Ward Holder.

The Session submitted the two documents below to the Presbytery and to the General Assembly's Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage.

Fort Square's Response to the PJC Case 08-01

The Session of the Fort Square Presbyterian Church wishes to make clear the church's position on the case "Presbytery of Boston vs. Jean K. Southard, minister of Word and Sacrament." The Fort Square Church stands firmly in favor of the Dissenting Opinion of PJC members Margaret MacLeod and R. Ward Holder when it states "We disagree with the commission decision and do not join in it. While we find that Rev. Southard found

herself in a difficult position given the request of two valued elders of her church, we do not find that tension to be sufficient reason to grant release from the strictures of the discipline of the Constitution. Her action of social justice came at the cost of her obedience to her ordination vows (W-4.4003e), and created a situation that worked against the peace, unity and purity of the Church."

Rev. Southard not only disobeyed her ordination vows, but also ignored the clear command of Scripture and the directive of the Confession and the Book of Order defining marriage as "the union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live" (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXVI).

Session Response to the General Assembly's Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage

"What is the place of covenanted same gender partnerships in the Christian community?"

The Session of Fort Square Presbyterian Church wishes to make clear the church's position on marriage. We believe the clear statement of Scripture, the Confessions, and the Book of Order that Christian marriage is the commitment and joining of one man and one woman. We therefore cannot affirm, support, or countenance covenanted same gender partnerships.

In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus

says, "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

The Westminster Confession states in Chapter XXVI, "Christian marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live."

The Book of Order directive is found in W-4.9001. It says, "Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by a woman and a man to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith."

We affirm Christ's mandate to love one another, to share the Gospel within our communities and the world, and to welcome all into our fellowship. Our church is a place where sinners hear and read the redeeming message of Jesus. We believe in the power of the Gospel through the Holy Spirit to change lives.

Reflections on Giving

What is Giving?

It has been said that it is well to give when asked, but it is better to give unasked, through understanding. When we do this, many times we feel more blessed than the person we're helping. For as our faith grows, our desire to show God's love to others grows. We best express our love when we are meeting others' needs through caring, helping and serving.

Not only do we need to give our money, we must also give of our resources, our time, and our energy. We give of ourselves, believing in life and

death's rewards; we give with joy, for joy, too, is our reward.

What does the Bible say about giving and receiving? Dr. Charles Stanley sums it up this way:

Why we give:

We desire to follow the will of God (2 Cor 8:5);

We are motivated by a sincere heart (2 Cor. 8:8).

What we give:

We offer what we have (2 Cor 8:12);

We put our spiritual gifts into action (Rom 12:6–8).

What happens:

We meet the needs of others (Acts 20:35).

How God responds:

He balances out needs, helping those who have little by bringing them resources from those who have much (2 Cor 8:13–15).

So, the question for reflection becomes: **Think of ways you share your time, gifts, and resources. How could you give more in these areas?**

—Marilyn Scrizzi
for the Budget Committee

*From the Pastor
continued from page 1*

job interview, for healing to occur, and health to return. Or we wait for a grief to subside. Several of us are waiting for these very things. Often, it's far from easy. But if the outcome is longed-for, or the promise is sure, we wait.

One of the great Bible texts for Advent is Psalm 130:

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word, I put my hope" (v.5)

It takes effort to wait like that. Soul-waiting is no passive condition. It requires alertness, expectancy, and attentiveness to God's Word. How intently does the psalmist wait and watch for the Lord?

"My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning" (v.6).

Have you ever noticed that the

work of waiting is easier to bear when we wait with others, that hope grows stronger when it's shared? Maybe that's why the psalmist calls to others in the community of faith:

"O Israel, put your hope in the Lord" (v.7a).

He even tells them why:

"For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with Him is great power to redeem" (v.7b)

God will come through. God's coming is as certain and sure as the morning for which the watchmen wait.

As Christ's people, we believe that Jesus's eventual coming, His triumphant return, is even *more* certain and sure than the morning. For Jesus's promise "I will come back and take you to be with me" (John 14:3) is absolutely solid and dependable. He has

already proven that by His coming the *first* time. He can be trusted to return at the *right* time.

Meanwhile, we wait—diligently, faithfully, expectantly, and together. Meanwhile, we pray—for the ongoing ministry of Fort Square and of the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for one another, for the work of the Pastoral Nominating Committee, and for that person, as yet unknown to us, who will become your next Pastor.

That person can't possibly know at present how fortunate he or she is to have been called to labor and minister among you. But once that match is made, by God's grace, it will be obvious to all that it was worth the wait, the work, the watching. And it will be, whatever the time or season, a Happy New Year indeed!

—Yours in Christ's Service,
Pastor Bart

PNC Nominees Announced

The Church Nominating Committee has completed the recommended slate of nominees for the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). We sought candidates who would represent the diversity of the Fort Square congregation in age, gender, and race. We asked each candidate to respond to a questionnaire (attached) to determine their understanding of the position and their commitment to fulfill the requirements to the best of their ability. The following are those nominated for this position:

Walter Baker Jr., Walter Baker III, Glen Comiso, Edythe MacBeth, Bob MacDonald, Mary MacDonald, Mary Megias, Dale Noun, Mary O'Brien, Scott Simpson; Dick MacLeod, chair

The Nominating Committee recommends the following schedule for the Called Meeting of the Congregation with the purpose of electing a PNC:

November 22 and November 29—printed and verbal announcements from the pulpit

Congregational Meeting, Sunday, December 6, at 9:30 am, immediately following the 8:30 am service and before the Sunday School time. No coffee hour; 10 am Sunday School; 11 am Worship Service

Nominations from the Floor

In order for nominations from the floor to be accepted, the nominee must be asked and agree to serve and must answer the following questions in writing and submit the responses to Carlton West, chair, of the Church Nominating Committee, *no later than 9:30 am Sunday, November 29, 2009.*

1. What ministries of the church are you involved/in-terested in?
2. What gifts and skills would you bring to the PNC?

3. How do you understand the time commitment required by this work?
4. Describe your level of knowledge about the church, community, presbyterian theology and government.

A secret ballot will be provided if there are nominations other than the above slate proposed.

Only Fort Square members can vote.

Eleven members will be elected based on votes received.

*Respectfully submitted,
The Church Nominating
Committee*

Carlton West, chair

June Caley

Ed Christopher

Joyce Duprey

John MacDonald

Peggy MacLeod

Lois Marshall

June Newman

*(Vice Chair Kathy Ryan
has been unable to attend
the meetings due to illness.)*

Is PPL Calling You?

*Greetings in the name of the
Giver and Sustainer of all life!*

Last year, I struggled with doubt that Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL) would survive the year. Our budget remains precarious, but **I am changed**. God has provided month by month through large and small gifts from our donors. With God's help and your partnership, PPL continues to uphold the value of life in the PC (USA).

We've been a pro-life presence at every General Assembly meeting for 30 years. Our number one goal is to change the policies and positions of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, sexuality, the family and emerging bioethical issues are consistent with Scripture and the Confessions.

PPL will be present at the 219th General Assembly in

Minneapolis (July 3–10, 2010). We are recruiting volunteers for our PPL GA Team. Is God calling YOU to be a member of the PPL team?

Thank you Fort Square for your faithful support of this ministry to the church.

*—In Christ for Life,
Marie Bowen, Executive Director,
Presbyterians Pro-Life*

www.ppl.org

ppl@ppl.org

☒ NOTES OF THANKS ☒

Dear Church Family,
A heartfelt thank-you to all of you who supported me and walked or sponsored various walkers in the September Myositis Walk at Pond Meadow Park in Braintree. Your response was more than generous and raised much needed funds. The outpouring of good will gave me a real lift!

God's love for me is very evident in the kindness and compassion I receive from you, my church family. Without your continued prayers and concern for me, I certainly would not do as well these days. Bless you all for caring and putting your prayers for me into action.

*In His Love,
Dagmar Slaven*

Dear Brothers and Sisters at Fort Square,
Thank you so much for giving us an opportunity to share about how God has been leading us into ministry in Malawi. Thank you also for the financial gift that we received while we were there in May. It helped to pay for the language and intercultural communication classes that we just finished at Wheaton College. You have already played such a major role

in our journey by helping us to connect with SIM, and we are grateful for your continued partnership with us. We wish we could have stayed for several weeks to catch up with all of you—as it is, we miss you more now than we did before we came!

*With love,
Dean and Penny Stocker,
Tazelaar and Julie*

Dear Church Family,
I wish to thank you for the prayers, visits, phone calls, cards, and especially the wonderful meals I received after my recent surgery. I am recovering well and greatly appreciate all the help during this time.

*In Christ's Love
Liz MacPherson*

Dear Fort Square Family,
Thank you so very much for your loving prayers, concern, and the cards sent to Bob and me on the recent deaths of my sister Lois, my brother Jerry, and my cousin Naomi. We were fortunate to spend some time with each of them last fall. Memories are great, but the best part is that they were Christians and we will see them

again at "The House."

"There is a hello after goodbye, a blessed reunion promised in time.

We will be them far longer than we were without, no doubt.

No more tears in our eyes in that beautiful, wonderful, hello after goodbye."

*In His Grip,
Joyce MacDonald*

Dear Fort Square family,
We want to express our thanks for all the support given to the family when our mother, Dorothy Baker, passed away. We appreciate the many cards of sympathy and all the effort that went into the collation following the funeral. The wonderful food prepared and all the work in the set-up and clean-up of Fellowship Hall were very much appreciated. We are also grateful for the many cards sent to Mom, prayers, gifts of food, and visits during her illness. Thank you again so very much for all your kindness extended during a difficult time.

*God Bless,
Walter, Edward, Derelyn,
Meredith, and Glenn Baker*

***"All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord,
and all your saints shall bless you!"***

Psalm 145:10

Quincy Moms Pack a Little Happiness

Twelve Quincy moms worked together recently to pack more than 50 shoe boxes full of Christmas gifts for needy children.

The moms are all members of the Quincy Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group that meets at Fort Square Presbyterian Church. The shoe boxes, stuffed with gifts, will join millions of boxes being shipped overseas by Operation Christmas Child, part of the non-profit group Samaritain's Purse, serving the poorest communities in the world.

The MOPS of Quincy Operation Christmas Child shoe box project is an annual collaboration between the MOPS moms and the Fort Square congregation. Members of the church donate school supplies, toys, toiletries, and candy to fill the boxes—as well as monetary donations to cover the cost of shipping the gifts. The MOPS moms add to the huge collection of gifts and give their time to pack the boxes.

“The shoe box packing party has developed into a wonderful annual tradition,” said Cindy Comiso. “Our regular meetings focus on the issues closest to

moms' hearts—finances, family health, relationships, work-life balance, and other parenting topics. The shoe boxes are a great way to turn our focus outwards to needy children and their families.”

With Christmas carols playing as background music, tasty treats to eat, and plenty of good conversation, the packing party signals an early start to the Christmas season for these



mothers, all of whom have busy family lives with their preschool children. But it's a start which sets the right tone for the following weeks, focusing on time spent with friends—and the joy of giving to others.

“Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has sent nearly 70 million gift-wrapped presents to children who otherwise would not receive a Christmas gift,” Comiso related. “Each one contains a booklet which shares the joy of the Christmas story. It's great that the moms

in our local MOPS group can play a part in a project that has an impact on so many people worldwide.”

Lindsay Carinci, a member of the MOPS group, said of this year's packing party, “We had such fun working together wrapping the shoe boxes and filling them with gifts suitable for boys and girls in different age groups. My five-year-old Isabella joined the packing party this year. She had a blast choosing gifts for each box. It was a wonderful way to show her that she can give to kids who won't be as fortunate as she will this Christmastime.”

[Editor's Note: This article was adapted from a press release prepared by Catherine Milson. Cindy Comiso and Catherine can be heard in a radio interview on December 3 on Quincy Access Television (QATV), talking about Operation Christmas Child and MOPS. Thanks and praise to Cindy, Catherine, and the MOPS moms for this work and the glorification of God through this international ministry.]

*“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.”*

Psalm 127:3-4

Picnic on the Green: Block Party BBQ Serves 100

The weather on Sunday, September 20, was sunny and cool—a perfect autumn day for the Fifth Annual Fort Square Community Welcome Sunday—now known as the Fort Square Block Party). Through special notices placed in the church bulletin well in advance, an attractive poster in the manse sign case (thanks to Leann Davis Alspaugh), and press releases sent to the *Patriot-Ledger*, *Quincy Sun*, several community newspapers, and the Quincy Cable TV Channel, the public received a “red-carpet invitation” to worship with us at our Sunday services and to enjoy a nice family-style barbecue afterwards. For the first time, the picnic was held on the Fort Square green at the front of the church, a much more pleasant spot than our past location on the asphalt-covered parking lot at the rear.

Thanks to a generous donation from Maurice and Lynn Bienvenue, two Quincy police officers were hired to supervise the outdoor event (and to enjoy dining with us during their break). Ron Leone of Steam Kettle BBQ Catering provided his large gas grill and service staff gratis to prepare the hot dogs and hamburgers for the hungry picnickers. Dave Dingley furnished the soft drinks. Salads, desserts, and snacks (such as chips, cheese-and-

crackers, and vegetables with dips) came from the combined pot-luck efforts of the picnickers themselves who certainly covered the groaning board to capacity.

Thanks once again to Marilyn Scrizzi, Roche Brothers Supermarkets provided \$150 worth of hamburgers, hot dogs, buns, and condiments for the principal entrées. Lynn and Maurice also supplied special entrées as a back-up (this extra food was in turn donated to a local homeless shelter). Randy Nielsen provided some nice background recordings of Christian folk music to entertain the picnickers. Lastly, Jon Wilson set up a basketball court to let the youngsters (and a few oldsters) work off some steam and extra calories.

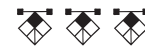
Most important of all, we opened our church doors a little wider to the Quincy community at large. We encouraged our friends, neighbors, and family members to worship with us, to hear a moving and inspirational sermon by Rev. Bart Kelso, and to consider joining our church family. We estimate that around 100 people attended the family barbecue.

Plans are now being discussed to extend our welcome mat even further through other events, such as concerts and holiday specials. Remember the Christmas pageants from years

past? Perhaps, these may be revived in the not-too-distant future.

In the meantime, our 2009 Fort Square Block Party has left warm and lasting memories for all. We can be assured of an even greater event in 2010.

—David Dingley



*“Therefore, we are
ambassadors for
Christ, God making
his appeal through
us. We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.
For our sake he made
him to be sin who
knew no sin, so that
in him we might
become the righteous-
ness of God.”*

2 Corinthians 5:20–21



October-Fest at Fort Square

What a great time! We thank our hosts—John and Audrey MacDonald, Len and Pat Harding, Bob MacDonald, Annie MacLeod, Lois Marshall, and Joyce Duprey who prepared and served the authentic German meal. We also thank the entertainers—Len Harding singing in 50-year-old German, Lois Marshall (ha! ha!) singing and leading us in “Edelweiss,” Bill Slaven singing “Go A-Wandering” with German pronunciation by Dagmar Slaven, and the Drei Tenors, Herr Bob, Herr Len, and Herr John, singing songs from their recently-released CD (available for 15 euro). We also thank our tour guide, John MacDonald, for his spectacular slide and music show of Austria and German Bavaria. The mountains and the flowers were sooooo beautiful.

This was truly a fun night,

and we hope to see more of these opportunities in the future. If you missed this one get your reservation in early for the next event. What a great way to bring our congregation together socially. Great job gang!

—submitted by Peggy MacLeod



SORTINGS: CLOTHING MINISTRY

Again this year, we find more and more needy coming to our Church for our help. Some look to us for their needs, and some as a entitlement that we should provide. Your gifts and prayers for this staff is greatly appreciated, as we try to show God’s blessings.

—Bob Knowlton



“A Walk in the Park”—Myositis Walk Raises \$5,000

Sponsored by St. Paul’s/Algonquin Masonic Lodge, the Walk for Myositis Awareness took place on Saturday, September 19, at Pond Meadow Park in Braintree. We had hoped to raise \$2,000 for our first try at this kind of fundraising. We were blessed with great weather, good volunteers, and with so many people willing to join us for the walk or help with a check. In the end, we raised more than \$5,000!

Myositis is a debilitating muscle disease. Our sister Dag-

mar Slaven has suffered from this condition for more than 20 years. Read Dagmar’s story at www.myomusings.com.

We’re putting together the 2010 committee and hope to increase proceeds at next year’s event. Would you like to represent Fort Square Church on this committee? Duties would include planning or coordinating sponsorships from our church. If you are interested, please contact me as soon as possible.

—Bob Knowlton

THAT’S THE 23RD PSALM!

The Lord is my Shepherd—
That’s Relationship!

I shall not want—
That’s Supply!

He maketh me to lie down
in green pastures—
That’s Rest!

He leadeth me beside
the still waters—
That’s Refreshment!

He restoreth my soul—
That’s Healing!

He leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness—
That’s Guidance!

For His namesake—
That’s Purpose!

Yea, though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death—
That’s Testing!

I will fear no evil—
That’s Protection!

For Thou art with me—
That’s Faithfulness!

Thy rod and Thy staff
they comfort me—
That’s Discipline!

Thou preparest a table before
me in the presence of mine
enemies—
That’s Hope!

Thou annointest my head
with oil—
That’s Consecration!

My cup runneth over—
That’s Abundance!

Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days
of my life—
That’s Blessing!

And I will dwell in the house
of the Lord—
That’s Security!

Forever—
That’s Eternity!

Can You Imagine? John Wycliffe

Robes swished and footsteps echoed in the halls of Oxford University in England in the 1300s. Students were rushing to class to hear John Wycliffe, a leading professor. In studying his Latin Bible, Wycliffe realized how far church leaders had strayed from its teaching, and he was telling his students about it.

Church leaders had become very rich by taxing the people and taking land in payment for their services. There was a lot of fighting among them. They quarreled with the rulers, but neither seemed to care for the poor. Wycliffe felt that church leaders should be poor as the apostles were.

Because of his teaching and

writing about the faults in the church, Wycliffe was placed on trial in 1377. A crowd of friends caused such a commotion at the trial that he was allowed to go free.

John Wycliffe was put out of Oxford, but he and his followers translated the Bible from Latin to English. Since there were no printing presses yet at that time, every word was written by hand. Because few people could read, he sent “poor priests” called Lollards to the villages to read the Bible in English.

Wycliffe died of a stroke in 1384, but his followers carried on with translating and bringing the Bible in English to all of England. They brought

Wycliffe’s teachings to Bohemia where a priest named John Huss eagerly read them. John Huss was burned at the stake in 1415 for his beliefs.

In 1428, the leaders of the church ordered that Wycliffe’s bones be dug up and burned and his followers killed. But this did not keep God from working. Wycliffe was God’s chosen man to prepare the way for the Reformation more than 100 years later. His teachings were passed on to Martin Luther in the 1500s. For this reason Wycliffe is called the “Morning Star of the Reformation.”

God was moving in mysterious ways.

—June Caley

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

[Editor’s note: Bert Nogler continues his study of the Beatitudes.]

Love your enemies that you may be sons of your Father. This plainly teaches that God’s love extends even to His enemies. This universal love of God’s is manifest in blessings which God bestows on all indiscriminately. This is called common grace as in Matt 5:44–45 “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those that curse you, do good to those that hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He

makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

This must be distinguished from the everlasting love God has for the elect, as in Jeremiah 31:3,

“The Lord has appeared of old to me saying: yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness I have drawn you.

For they shall be called sons of God.”

As sons of God, it would be appropriate if we would resemble God and His sterling attributes as put forth in His Word; for the children of this

world love to fish in troubled waters, but the children of God are peacemakers, the quiet in the land.

I must say that my capacity to be a peacemaker is diminished by the lies, the hate, and the ungodliness that goes on in our society, our governments, and even our churches. But I know that my redeemer lives, His name is Jesus, and He is the way, the truth, and the life. 2 Thessalonians 3, “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.”

The Lord be with you all.

—Bert Nogler

What Our Missionaries Tell Us

Recently, it occurred to me that you might enjoy some excerpts from some of the many newsletters that we receive from our missionaries.

“The Most Important Thing”
George and Anne Harper in Croatia wrote of “Mufid, a second year student, [who] preached his first sermon recently. Afterward, with great enthusiasm, he told me what he had preached on: “The most important thing....We cannot just know about Jesus, we must know him intimately and strive to be closer to Him. That is the most important thing.””

Progress in Haiti
The Haitian Mountain Ministry (HMM), founded in 2001 by Dan Allen, is used by God to meet the needs of these mountain people. The Union Brotherhood Baptist Church has been provided with funds from HMM to construct a new Christian school with paid teachers. In addition, Bibles and other ministry supplies have been provided, and a well has been drilled to provide water for daily needs—most important, however, people have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Hello From Ohio
A brief “hello” from Mike and Donna Brown in Ohio who continue to share their story with many churches in order to secure missionary support. “We are thankful for the Lord’s provision in our lives. We are grateful for the opportunity to be at Fort Square once again and to

MISSIONS REPORT

share with you about what God has allowed us to be a part of in Bolivia....Thank you again for being such a wonderful part of our ministry....We are proud to be your missionaries in Bolivia.

“Pre-Prayer-ation”
Dean and Penny Stocker’s letter, aptly named “Pre-Prayer-ation,” tells of their work before going to Malawi. “Thank you to everyone who prayed for us on our trip, who shared homes, food, friendship and encouragement. Thanks to those who joined our prayer team, who contributed to our support and ministry. Thank you, Jesus, for preparing the way and for promising to be with us always, even to the end of the age.”

We offer a real praise as we were informed that Penny passed her exam and is now a Nurse Practitioner.

“A New Season”
Paige and Mario Miño’s newsletter, “A New Season,” gave us a timely description of their ministry—a Time to Play as Mario conducted a week long soccer tournament; a Time to Worship where “The Lord is tearing down barriers and allowing these young people to draw closer to him ... raising up Godly men and women who would be an example for the

generations to come;” a Time to Rejoice where these young people came to the retreat full of expectancy and, in just a day and a half, the Lord touched their hearts in a powerful way; finally, a Time for Love where the Lord has “allowed us to be channels of his love and mercy to the people in Guatemala.”

Togo Stories
Greg Yarian sent some tremendous stories about their mission in Togo, West Africa. “In each letter, we can tell you about successes. We can write about real miracles. But it important to communicate from time to time that we are in a war. There are no advances in the Kingdom of God without strong counter attacks.... It has been suggested that we need to form a team of veteran intercessors”—any volunteers?

“Garrett Gazette”
From Senegal, Corey and Katie Garrett relate the story of a young African who became a Christian and was baptized. Persecution followed for both the young person and the Garretts, which at times was very critical. “In an impossible situation, God provided an improbable way out.... [we ask for] prayer for their young, believing friend.”

All these stories of how God is working around the world remind me of how we, through our Missions Budget, can share in what the Lord has called us to do.

—Len Harding



"THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS"

Sunday, 13 December
One Service, 10am
Children's Choir
Adult Choir



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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