

WHEATON

CROSS † CONNECTIONS

But Then This ...

By Pastor John

Our denomination has long called itself "A Confessional Church." That is because one of the bases that we form a denomination around are historical confessions. Confessions are belief statements that purport to be summations of the teaching (or some of the teachings) of the Bible. To become an official CRC, a council has to agree that our three confessions, The Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, are good and faithful representations of the Word of God. When our elders and deacons are installed in office, they sign a document that attests that they hold the doctrines to be faithful to the Bible. As church members we also agree when we make profession of faith that we agree with the confessions of the church and will submit ourselves to them.

So the confessions are a pretty big deal with us. We do take them seriously. We do not add to them or altar them easily. We are quick to say that they are not the Bible themselves and that we will be willing to change or adapt them when we can be shown from the Bible that the confessions are in error, but they carry considerable weight and, are "forms of unity." As, CRCs we are rural, and city, and suburban, Canadian, US, rich, poor, red and yellow, black and white, but we hold these beliefs, formed by these documents in common.

Thus, it is pretty significant that the largest assembly of the CRC, the Synod, in 2009 proposed that in 2012 the Synod consider adopting the Belhar Confession and elevate it

to "confessional status" similar to that of the Heidelberg Catechism or Belgic Confession. Our sister church, The Reformed Church in America, (they also hold the HC, BC and Dort as forms of unity), has already adopted the confession and will bring it again to their synod for final ratification in 2012.

The Belhar Confession has its roots in the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa. It was first drafted in 1982, by Allan Boesak of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and was an "outcry of faith" and a "call for faithfulness and repentance." The document, declares that racism and forced separation of cultures, and unjust distribution of essential foods and living supplies, form a "confession" that puts the very gospel of Jesus Christ at stake.

The confession has become a standard of unity among many South African churches that at one time were divided and at war with each other even though they confessed the same God and read the same Bible. Belhar has made possible reconciliation among Reformed churches in Southern Africa and has aided the process of reconciliation within the nation of South Africa.

While rooted in a particular historical situation (all confessions are) Belhar's relevance is not confined to Southern Africa.

Belhar addresses three key issues of concern to all churches:

1) CREATIONAL INCLUSION: Unity of the church. In John 17, just before Jesus leaves to go to be arrested and killed, he prays for his disciples and those who will come to believe in him through their teaching. He prays, "May they be one as you and I are one, so that the world may know that you sent me." [my emphasis]. Jesus and the Bible make it very clear that our

witness as people who are called by his name is laughable if we separate ourselves and disapprove of each other over creational differences that he made! For Christians and for churches to divide up over such things as race and gender and ethnicity – all created things – is directly contrary to God's vision for a creation that gives him glory.

2) **INCARNATIONAL PROCLAMATION:** God has given the ministry of reconciliation within church and society to the Church. Jesus Christ died and rose again to begin the new creation. He instituted a new way, a new order, and a new way of being that shatters the old one that is based on sin and selfishness and exclusion and bigotry. It is the call of the church to boldly and fearlessly proclaim that newness. Any system, (political, governmental, economic, ecclesiastical, recreational, etc), which denies the coming of a new way of life based on a new obedience, is born of the old order and must be challenged, decried, and will ultimately will be replaced.

3) **JUST OBEDIENCE:** To accomplish that newness and to see the reach and love of God demonstrated in our living today, God calls people who call themselves by his name to be at the lead toward justice and equitable distribution of the necessities of life. Wherever he went, Jesus proclaimed in word and deed the establishment of his kingdom of justice and equity. “the Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

That is essentially what the Belhar confession is about: inclusion; proclamation; and obedience. It is based on Christ's creation, his preaching and teaching, and his obedience all the way to self-sacrifice. The Belhar is a document for “liberation theology” but only in-so-far as that is what scripture itself is about. It is not a document advocating socialism or communism. It calls for Christians to recognize that the creation has been given to all people for the glory of God.

For myself, although I love the Belhar very much, I do believe it has some small flaws that

would make it subject to possible misinterpretation. I would like to see those corrected or at least footnoted by the committee that ultimately recommends it to our denomination for “confessional status.” I also believe that it is a very long shot that it will ever be raised to such status for us. It is much more likely that it will be given something of the status of our “Contemporary Testimony” (“Our World Belongs to God”)

I urge the church to read the Belhar Confession itself and not all the bloggers that are out there saying absurd things about it to scare us.

Editors Note: There are copies of the Belhar Confession on the table near the mailboxes if you need a copy to review.

Early Risers

By Dave Sikkenga

The Early Risers (men’s) small group Bible study meets every Tuesday morning from 6:30-7:30 am at the International House Of Pancakes (IHOP) in Danada East, Wheaton. Since our numbers have been large enough (8-13) IHOP allows us to use the back room which gives us some privacy and makes discussion easier. We meet year around and only cancel for holiday conflicts.

We have just completed a study of Joshua and addressed the difficult issue of the complete destruction of some of the Canaanite cities by the Israelites—at the command of God. We don’t always resolve these difficult issues, but we certainly learn a lot as we propose and discuss explanations from various sources. Our “sources” including study Bible notes, our collective past learning, and the expertise of faithful members like former Bible teacher, Ted Dejong and our theological consultant Vern Geurkink.

Due to work (and retirement) schedules, we try to keep abide by the 1-hour limitation. In addition to having our spiritual “food” and our physical breakfast food, we always save some

time for sharing and praying together. We welcome others to join us. No preparation is required, the sharing and fellowship is great, and it is a meaningful way to start the day. We are now starting a study of selected chapters from Jeremiah that will provide an overview of this book. If you have any questions, please contact Floyd VanderMeer or Dave Sikkenga

Missions:

An Interview with Timo Goosen

By Grace Huitsing

Hi, Timo. We're grateful for your family's ministry to International Students at the University at Stellenbosch. You were a lot younger when your Dad studied Evangelism at Wheaton for a year and your family worshipped at Wheaton Church, but you may remember some kids. Actually, the high school Young People are leading this Sunday morning's worship service, and are also packing "Care Packages" at night for former members now in college. At their regular Sunday night meetings they take time to pray for each other, and would like to remember you three.

We know Christo is busy with science studies this first year at the university, and Philip is a freshman, but what about you? As a high school senior, you have your own school and study challenges. What are some of them?

"Struggling to concentrate due to medical problems (a serious sleep disorder), and I'm struggling with mathematics at the moment. I'm also a bit worried about my plans for next year. I plan on taking a gap year to work and earn some money before going to University. Still looking for a good job for next year, but God will make a way."

What special sports do South Africans enjoy? Are there any you especially follow? What do you and your friends do in spare time, probably

on weekends?

"We like listening to music and making music. I play the electric guitar and am also involved with producing electronic music as a hobby. My friends and I also like playing computer games and spending time in South Africa's beautiful Nature."

What's the best book you've read in high school?

"We read the all-American classic To Kill a Mocking Bird last year, and I found the book very interesting and enjoyable. But my all time favorite book is John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress."

As your folks serve international students, do you get called on to socialize, cook, do dishes after a gathering?

"We're often involved in helping with cooking, dishes, fixing students' pc's, writing e-mails for the church newsletter, carrying furniture for students who are moving, setting up sound equipment for socials and church, etc. We also often share the home and our food with international students."

Wow! Wheaton CRC students will be impressed—and so will their parents! Well, Mr. Gordon Anderson reminded our Missions Committee to uphold you men, too, and we're praying that you have energy and strength for each day, Timo. Thanks much for taking the time to reply.

"Thanks for your church's interest and support in our family's work, and your prayers are much appreciated."

Center of the Bible

Q: What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalm **117**

Q: What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalm **119**

Q: Which chapter is in the center of the Bible?

A: Psalm **118**

Fact: There are **594** chapters before Psalm **118**

Fact: There are **594** chapters after Psalm **118**

Add these numbers up and you get **1188**.

Q: What is the center verse in the Bible?

A: Psalm **118:8**

Q: Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

A. The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of His will, just send them to the center of His Word!

Psalm **118:8**

'It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.'

Now isn't that odd how this worked out (or was God in the center of it all along)?

Meeting Minutes

By Dave Sikkenga

(Notes From Feb 8, 2010 Elders Meeting, January 18, 2010 Executive Meeting)

1. Special Evening Worship Services for March:

March 21: The elders approved a motion to cancel our normal evening worship service on March 21 (6:00 pm) and to encourage our membership to attend a special combined worship service at Elmhurst CRC. The invitation indicates that the service would include "the Calvin College Wind Ensemble (formerly Calvin Band) assisting with congregational singing, and Rev. Dale Cooper, former Calvin College chaplain, preaching".

Note—for Easter-April 4: We will have the normally scheduled evening worship service at our church

2. Young Adults Survey:

Elders Tom Sytsma and Susan Anderson are leading a project to address the concern for young adults (age 18-30) retention in our congregation. To initiate this project, a survey is being prepared to improve the understanding of how our young adults view the various aspects of our church. The survey covers the areas that our spring, 2009 Natural Church Development survey (of 30 congregational members) addressed and it will be given to about 40 young adults that are current or past regular attendees at our church.

3. Pastoral Transition Issues:

A. The council would like to start the process of establishing a pastoral Search Committee. They will start discussing the composition, scope, and direction at the February 22 council meeting. The congregation is invited to provide input (via elders or deacon) to this search process.

B. The executive committee is working on the "Church Profile", a denominational document typically filled out prior to making a pastor call. They have collected much of the data and will continue working on this at the February 15

Executive meeting. This Church Profile will then be discussed with the full council at the February 22 meeting.

C. Another typical step in the pastoral transition is to invite the retiring pastor to give his reflections on the ministry and ministry needs. Pastor John has drafted a document and the elders will discuss this document at a special elders meeting on March 22. Items from this document will also be incorporated, as appropriate, into information prepared for prospective new pastors for WCRC.

Insights and Encounters

By Bev Brown

Everyone in northern Illinois had a little encounter with God this past Wednesday morning, whether or not they realized it.

Around 4:00 AM on February 10th the northern part of the state experienced an earthquake measuring 3.8 on the Richter scale. Although the epicenter was determined to be Kane County, people were started by the quake as far away as Michigan and Iowa. We were told on the news later in the day that a 3.8 is a mild to moderate quake--the front page of the Chicago Tribune on Thursday called it "Just a tiny quake"--and if there was any significant (or even insignificant) damage, I never heard about it.

I managed to sleep right through it. I was up shortly after 4:00 AM because our cat was crying incessantly wanting to go out. But I didn't hear anything about an earthquake until I got to work that morning. There my coworkers described the boom that awakened them as sounding variously like thunder or a garbage truck or a snowplow. Others described seeing the room shake. One woman said it felt like something picked up her and her husband's bed and dropped it. My coworkers laughed as they told their 4:00 AM story: Whew! Dodged

that bullet!

Glad I missed being scared out of my wits at 4:00 AM. There is something isolating about the dark of night that can make a person feel utterly alone. It doesn't matter, at 4:00 AM when disaster strikes, that you live in Wheaton and everyone can spit to their neighbor's property. In your mind, you're out in that Iowa cornfield, a good mile and a half from civilization.

But on second thought, maybe I missed something profound by sleeping soundly that night. Certainly the word "earthquake" had very recently been in the forefront of people's minds before this one came to Illinois. Our own church had just taken up a special collection for the earthquake survivors of Haiti, that small, unfortunate, dirt-poor neighbor of ours to the southeast. We were shocked as the news reports, photos and video began to come in about the vast devastation and loss of life. But (and I'll speak only for myself) it felt distant.

While I sympathized and empathized as best I could, I don't think I once considered the idea that that earthquake could have happened here, that we could have been brought to our knees as Haiti was, that it could have been us instead of them.

The Psalmist says "be still and know that I am God." That's what I think I missed on Wednesday--the elementary reminder that it is still God's world and He is in charge--whether it's in the poorest or most affluent nation in the Western Hemisphere. As technologically advanced as our society is, we can still be completely caught off-guard by the Master of the universe and helpless before His might.

When I was in graduate school years ago, I came across a setting of Psalm 100 in a 16th-century Psalter used in England and colonial America. The words, except for the old English spellings, were identical to those I had learned as a child, except for one word: what I had learned as "mirth" was translated as "feare" in the 1563 version:

All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with chearful voyce,
him serve with feare, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him and rejoyce.

To me, mirth and fear are not even in the same ballpark. But it got me to thinking that we tend to list more to the "mirth" side of things, perhaps to the detriment of a more balanced picture of God. The Psalmist refers to the Lord as mighty and terrible, awesome, a strong deliverer, a bulwark and refuge, and, yes, more than a little fear-inspiring.

If I had been awake last Wednesday in the wee hours of the morning, I think I may have been reminded of the fear of the Lord.

By Bonnie Groen

For years, Floyd and I have been praying for our daughter, Stacy. She persisted in adulterous contacts with another man. Night after night, we struggled to shut off the thoughts and tears so we could get some sleep. We wrestled with God – why was he allowing this happen to us. What had we done wrong? Why did we deserve this kind of agony?

Then came the news that she was going through disciplinary procedures at church. Next that she was going to have his baby. It seemed to be going from bad to worse. Where was God? Why didn't he hear our pleading? What should we say or avoid saying? How should we treat a grandchild who came out of such circumstances? It seemed hopeless.

But God was in control. He had a plan. He performed a miracle. With Stacy and Kevin's permission, I would like to share with you the testimony they gave at Glen Ellyn Bible Church on January 17th, just a few weeks ago.

Testimony

Stacy *Do miracles still happen? My answer is YES!!! Now, I want to tell you about the miracle in my own life.*

Our marriage was a wreck. We didn't know how to communicate. I felt controlled, unappreciated and unloved. So instead of working on my marriage, I gave up and chose to find the love and attention I needed from

another man. The sin of adultery led to serious consequences not only for me, but for Kevin, our children, our family and friends.

The consequences for me involved alienation from family and friends, shame and a painful disciplinary process at another church. I felt misunderstood. I felt I was being blamed for ALL the problems in the marriage and that no one was even looking at the problems Kevin had that had led me to the point of making a conscious decision to sin.

Another consequence was that I bore a child out of the affair. She has proven to be a blessing in our lives but it is also a struggle as we have to be reminded of the affair every single day dealing with custody and visitation issues.

I was invited to Glen Ellyn Bible Church by a friend after I was asked to leave the other church. I remember going up and talking to Kelly (Kelly Brady, Senior Pastor) very early on after starting to attend GEBC. His message convicted me. This began a dialogue with Kelly. I remember one conversation that stuck with me. I remember telling Kelly that I wanted a divorce from Kevin and that the man I had an affair with had started attending church. I remember him saying to me, "Stacy, even if he becomes a Christian, it is still not OK. It will never be OK. It was an affair and will always be an adulterous relationship. I was trying to justify my behavior and somehow make my sin right. The more I tried to make my sin OK, the more convictions I received from the Holy Spirit that it was not OK

Kevin *I was anything but the perfect husband. I was controlling, neglectful, verbally abusive and did not model love toward Stacy. The consequences of my own sin were equally to blame for the problems in our marriage.*

As things continued to unravel at home, I became frustrated as things appeared hopeless. Rather than turning to God in prayer, I decided to take matters into my own hand – filing for divorce and becoming even more controlling, especially with the children.

Stacy *Kevin would not allow the kids to come*

to church with me. They attended another church with him while I attended GEBC. The kids didn't understand why we were going to different churches and it became a weekly issue. One Sunday in November of 2005, I left for church with the kids sobbing because they wanted to come with me.

That Sunday, something moved in Kevin's heart and he came to GEBC with the kids to find me. By no coincidence, there was a "Watermark" that day of a woman who had an affair. Her "Watermark" touched me so much that I asked Kevin to pray with me and Kelly and that day, we committed to stop the divorce proceedings and to work on our marriage.

Kevin I remember praying to God to open my eyes to see how wonderful Stacy is when it hit me – I prayed that God would also open my eyes, my ears and my heart to see how wonderful HE is. I was longing to hear and eager to listen. I gave the control back to God, realizing it is only by the grace of God that this marriage will be reconciled.

It was not all downhill from there. It was a daily struggle. It took years. It took counseling. It took prayer and a lot of pain. The Holy Spirit used many people and events to work in our lives.

Stacy Kevin and I both made a choice to stay in our marriage because of our commitment to our marriage vows that we had made before God. It was not a choice made out of desire, but out of obedience. There were many days that I would question what we were doing and it seemed hopeless, but we continued on.

We both went to years of counseling with a Christian counselor. Watching the Movie "Facing The Giants" was a turning point for me. I was convicted by some of the scripture in the movie. I cried out to God in prayer asking for forgiveness and truly repenting of my sin. I meditated on his word and began praying for God's healing in our marriage.

Kevin Prayer was a major factor in saving our marriage. Prayers of our own and the multitude of prayers for us by numerous people, some of which we don't even know. There is power in

public repentance which led to people holding each of us accountable for our actions. We were blessed to have a couple in our neighborhood who were willing to walk through the struggle with us giving us Biblical Counsel through it all. They were not afraid to confront both of us on our actions.

I have told many... If not for this "storm" in our life, my walk with Christ would not be where it is today. I would not want it any other way.

Stacy I prayed for God to give me the desire to make my marriage work because at that time, I felt convicted but did not believe God could heal us or really even wanted God to heal us. There were days that all I could do was cry out to God in pain and cling to his word. There were days of fasting and prayer. Ultimately, we clung to the hope that if we were obedient to God that he would bless that.

God has answered our prayers. He has given us the desire for one another and our marriage. We are no longer together because it is right, but because we want to be together. We are more in love now and are communicating together better than we ever did.

I have seen God move a mountain. I have seen a miracle in my own life. I've seen prayers get answered. I've seen broken hearts mended and new life where there was once only dry bones.

The miracle in my own life is what motivated me to share my story today. I have the confidence to say that nothing is impossible with God – no one is ever too far gone. If you are in the midst of a sin, you need to confess that sin and allow someone to hold you accountable for obedience to Christ. You need to allow God to restore you because he loves you and he will keep convicting you of the truth. It doesn't matter what you have done. "Impossible" is not a word in God's vocabulary. "Impossible" is just an excuse not to change. The path is long. The path is hard. The path may feel lonely. But God's plan for us is so much better than what we can even imagine. You can find that way if you put your faith, hope and trust in Jesus Christ and allow him to restore you to the person he desires you to be.

I want to close with a Bible verse that I read as

I was praying about this message we would be delivering. It is Jeremiah 32:27:

“I am the Lord, God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”

Please join Floyd and me in praise for the miracles God still performs. He can do the same for anyone who is struggling with sin. We have to turn everything over to him and have complete faith that he will guide and direct. Often, he has purposes in mind that we cannot even begin to comprehend.

Sometimes we can catch a glimpse of his purposes here on earth – and this is one of those glimpses. Often, however, we will have to wait for eternity to see just what he had in mind for some of the things that were so difficult for us. We have to trust his promise that all things are being worked out for our good because we love him and are called according to his purposes. Our God is an awesome God.

By Ed Gabrielse

It was a dusty corner of yet another antique store. There was nothing to distinguish the faded green cover from the hundreds of other similar books. But the gold leaf print on the spine was a name I recognized – “The Life and Work of **Dwight L. Moody**”. On the front cover was a photo of Moody, embossed lilies and the name of the author – J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D.

On the first inside page was the inscription, “Presented to the Christian World as A Tribute to the Memory of the Greatest Apostle of the Age by Rev. J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D. For many years a Co-Worker with Mr. Moody, and Vice President of the Bible Institute, of which Mr. D.L. Moody was President.” The copyright was 1900.

The spine was strong and unbroken. Inside, the pages were yellowed, but the fifty or so photographs were still quite vibrant. The price was \$18, so I offered \$15, and walked to the car with my prize. My wife’s protestations were expected, “Where do you think we have room

for another book?” But I stood my ground, suggested a corner on yet another shelf and began my journey into the life and work of this giant of the Christian church.

The first half of the book is a largely chronological sequence of Moody’s life. The second half delves into facets of his work. The second part has titles such as; Mr. Moody as an Evangelist, His Bible, His Co-Workers, Three Characteristic Sermons, His Creed, Three Cardinal Truths and A Month With Mr. Moody in Chicago.

Few living around the turn of the century were unaware of Moody. His passionate proclamation of the gospel convicted hundreds of thousands and resulted in the conversion of untold thousands. In reading the book, I was stunned to see the numbers that turned out to hear his preaching and pledged to begin life anew under the kingship of our Lord. Time after time, great amphitheatres were filled and thousands turned away, And this before the invention of any amplification systems.

Moody had no formal theological training. He had no speech coach. But he was a man who, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, spoke directly to the heart of fallen mankind. His was an abrupt, no nonsense, and domineering personality. But every waking moment was dedicated to the work of his Lord.

As I grew up, everyone seemed to know of Moody. One of the presets on every radio was WMBI. In fact, I remember one of the criteria for my parents in buying a new console radio for the living room was whether or not it could pull in WMBI. In school, we watched some of the first films from Moody that showed the blood flowing through the human body and other mysterious facets of God’s creation.

But my parents and the leaders in our church always viewed Moody’s work and style with some skepticism. “Were those really conversions?” “Shouldn’t real evangelism start by getting to know the person’s need and then applying a ‘rifle shot’ of our inspired Calvinistic insight to the exact point of that need?” And I suppose, without giving it too much thought (and relying on a naïve view of predestination) I built on that thinking to develop for myself a

non-confrontational style of evangelism.

The thinking went something like this. Christians should live a life of optimistic enthusiasm. After all, with all things being worked out for our good because we love the Lord, how can we be anything but optimistic and enthusiastic? I have tried to live that kind of life as an expression of my faith. And then as Peter explains it, "...if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way." 1 Peter 3:15 NLT

Others have asked about my optimism and enthusiasm and often it has become the trigger for witnessing to the saving work of Jesus Christ.

But when I read of the success of Moody and his team using a highly confrontational style, I am a bit embarrassed about the number of individuals I have personally led to Christ using my meticulously reasoned, non-confrontational style.

Perhaps I was wrong. I don't know.

I am just glad that our Lord is not entirely dependent on me for getting out the invitations to his banquet. I remain confident that when there is someone he wants as his own, he will work in their hearts, they will ask about the hope that is in me, and I will be ready to explain it.

Editors Note: The book has been added to the Church Library and should be available for check out shortly.

By Pam Eiten

When I was junior at Calvin College, I auditioned for the Capella, the top choral group on campus. I remember hanging up the phone and letting out a primordial shriek when Dr. Slenk called my dorm room to see if I were interested in singing with Capella. "Interested – are you kidding? WOW! Need you even ask!" I thought. At every concert Capella performed in the Fine Arts Center, it was standing room only. No brag, just fact: we were hot stuff! We sang

extremely well, we recorded a lovely CD (actually, an LP–this was 25 years ago), and we were headed abroad to sing in some of the major cathedrals of England. What could compare with singing the sublime music of Herbert Howells in the breathtakingly beautiful Salisbury Cathedral? From a choral standpoint at least, I thought the rest of my singing days would be all down hill.

I was wrong.

Last year, Keith and I flew to San Diego for a memorial service for my Uncle Marinus, my father's oldest brother. During the service, juxtaposed with the pastor's words of comfort and my cousins' tender words of remembrance, we sang in a quartet with two of my other cousins. The sanctuary was not jam-packed, as the Fine Arts Center had been when I sang with Capella; the church building itself was not lavish and ornate, like the historic cathedrals of England; our accompanist played on a modest keyboard, not a vast Baroque pipe organ. Our humble but sincere voices blended together, even as we fought to control our fragile emotions. Tears rolled down the faces of our cousins and their spouses. Thus something wonderful happened: we touched human hearts with God's precious gift of music. And this is what we sang:

Oh, when I come to die;
Oh when I come to die;
Oh when I come to die,
Give me Jesus...

What an incomparable gift it is for me to be able to share God's love and God's comfort through music. Ultimately, it's not the acoustics, or the setting, or the notes; it's not the poetry to which the music is set; but the most important thing is the eternal truth of God standing behind the music and the text. You can have all this world! Give me Jesus!

By Flora DeGroot

An encounter with God occurred one night in Michigan. It gave me an idea of just how big our God really is.

It was late at night. Paul and I arrived at our cottage. We unloaded the car and did what we had to do. I decided to take a walk down our pier before going to bed. As I was walking, it occurred to me that the stars were unusually bright.

I sat down on the bench near the end of the pier and gazed upward. I could feel the millions and millions of stars over me. It was like a blanket of stars beaming down on earth.

It was a sight and a feeling I will never forget. It gave me some idea of how great our God really is and an insight into just how small we really are. The fact that as big as he is he cares for me became so much more real to me that night.

By Lou Bommelje

I had been working in cabinetmaking shops for four years when I was drafted into the Army in 1950. I went for basic training at Fort Ord, Calif. with a whole train load of other draftees from Los Angeles. As we got off the train, we were divided into two groups. Later, we learned that one group was to go to Germany and the other to Korea. I was in the group going to Korea, or "in the pipeline" as we put it. After taking a battery of tests, I was supposed to go to the Army Corp. of Engineers upon completion of basic training.

One week near the end of basic training is spend in the field. Classes, meals, tactical problems and sleeping in pup tents is the norm for the week. On Thursday night, the problem was to "take a hill" by crawling up quietly and surprising the "defenders". In the dark, I unknowingly crawled through a patch of poison oak. God was there and I was unaware of His presence.

By Sunday morning, I was in the base hospital, - one big puffy welt from head to toe. It took me two weeks to get back for my final week of training. My training company had finished during my absence and I was moved to another company for that last week. My opening with the Engineers was closed and I was sent to Texas for antiaircraft training instead. God was

there and I was still unaware.

During this training, we trainees were very aware of conditions in Korea and asked those in the know many questions. We learned that those going before us to Korea were not placed in artillery but were sent to the front lines as infantry. Bummer! The last week of training, I happened to see on our bulletin board that there were openings in a Leaders' Course that took eight weeks to complete. I talked a few buddies into signing up with me and we were accepted into that course. God was there and I was still unaware.

At the end of that training, we were shipped of to Korea. Upon arrival there, we were all sent to anti aircraft batteries throughout Korea. We were the first replacements to artillery units! All my detours put me in Korea at just the right time! It was all in God's timing and I was not aware of it.

The first evening in my new unit, I was approached by a soldier to come and look at the radar van. He extolled the advantages of being inside the air conditioned radar during a rainstorm and sitting in a warm van in the winter time.

The next morning, I was welcomed and interviewed by our captain who asked if I had any preference in positions. I asked if I could be in the radar section and he placed me there. God was there and I still wasn't aware.

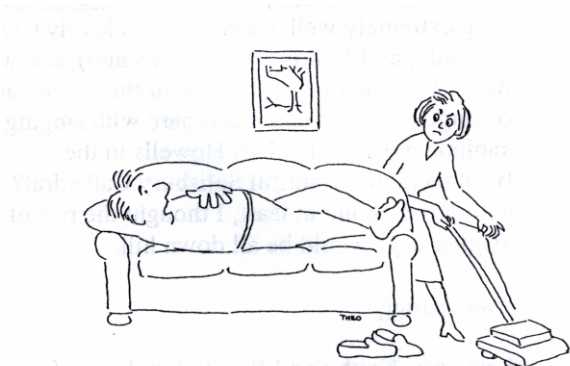
Working with that radar taught me the wonders that electrons can do. I enjoyed learning to operate the radar and soon moved up in rank until I was training new replacements to my crew.

When my time of service was over, I returned to working in cabinet shops. My fellow workers urged me to go to college and get into electronics. I did enroll and spent the remainder of my working life in that field. That was exactly where God wanted me.

I finally realized that God was beside me all that time.

Theo's View

Editor's Note: This is the seventh and last in a series of insights on our spiritual journey that Theo left us. Thanks, Theo



Consider the Lilies They neither toil nor...

A Reminder

Sometimes, Cross Connections will contain an article that is especially inspiring or an idea you want to share with a friend. Each month, the entire newsletter is available on the church website. Simply go to <http://www.WheatonCRC.org> and click on News. There are newsletters that go back two years or more.

If someone wants to know about our church, nothing gives the kind of insight into the joy of Christians living in the power of the Spirit that our newsletter provides. It is there for you to share.

OLD JIM

By Joan Taylor

Editor's Note: Find a good friend and read the following out loud to him or her. This was published in an English newspaper and a request to reproduce has been sent.

A minister passing through his church in the middle of the day, decided to pause by the altar and see who had come to pray.

Just then the back door opened, a man came down the aisle, the minister frowned as he saw the man hadn't shaved in a while.

His shirt was kinda shabby and his coat was worn and frayed, the man knelt, he bowed his head, then rose and walked away.

In the days that followed, each noon time came this chap, each time he knelt just for a moment, a lunch pail in his lap.

Well, the minister's suspicions grew, with robbery a main fear. He decided to stop the man and ask him, 'What are you doing here?'

The old man said, he worked down the road. Lunch was half an hour. Lunchtime was his prayer time, for finding strength and power.

'I stay only moments, see, because the factory is so far away; as I kneel here talking to the Lord, this is kinda what I say:

'I JUST CAME AGAIN TO TELL YOU, LORD, HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN, SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP AND YOU TOOK AWAY MY SIN.

DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW TO PRAY, BUT I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERYDAY. SO, JESUS, THIS IS JIM, JUSTCHECKING IN TODAY.'

The minister feeling foolish, told Jim that was fine. He told the man he was welcome to come and pray just anytime.

Time to go, Jim smiled, said 'Thanks.' He hurried to the door. The minister knelt at the altar, like he'd never done before.

His cold heart melted, warmed with love, and met with Jesus there. As the tears flowed, in his heart, he repeated old Jim's prayer:

'I JUST CAME AGAIN TO TELL YOU, LORD, HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN, SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP AND YOU TOOK AWAY MY SIN.

I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW TO PRAY, BUT I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERYDAY. SO, JESUS, THIS IS ME, JUST CHECKING IN TODAY.'

Past noon one day, the minister noticed that old Jim hadn't come. As more days passed without Jim, he began to worry some.

At the factory, he asked about him, learning he was ill. The hospital staff was worried, but he'd given them a thrill.

The week that Jim was with them, brought changes in the ward. His smiles, a joy contagious; changed people – were his reward.

The head nurse couldn't understand why Jim was always glad, when no flowers, calls or cards came. Not a visitor he had.

The minister stayed by his bed. He voiced the staff's concern: No friends had come to show they cared. He had nowhere to turn.

Looking surprised, old Jim spoke up and with a winsome smile; 'the nurse is wrong, she couldn't know, that HE has been here all the while.

Everyday at noon HE'S here, my dearest friend, you see. HE sits right down and holds my hand, and then HE says to me:

'I JUST CAME AGAIN TO TELL YOU, JIM, HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN, SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP, AND I TOOK AWAY YOUR SIN.

ALWAYS LOVE TO HAVE YOU VISIT, I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERY DAY, AND SO JIM, THIS IS JESUS. I'M CHECKING IN WITH YOU TODAY.'

Tiny Sermons

Thanks to Leo Buscaglia

Sometimes, the best lessons in life can be heard coming from the mouths of our little ones.

Following are a few of those comments which are sermons in themselves.

Teacher Debbie Moon's first graders were discussing a picture of a family. One little boy in the picture had a different hair color than the other members. One of her students suggested that he was adopted.

A little girl said, 'I know all about adoption, I was adopted.' 'What does it mean to be adopted?', asked another child.

'It means', said the girl, 'that you grew in your mommy's heart instead of her tummy!'

On my way home one day, I stopped to watch a Little League base ball game that was being played in a park near my home. As I sat down behind the bench on the first-base line, I asked one of the boys what the score was. 'We're behind 14 to nothing,' he answered with a smile.

'Really,' I said. 'I have to say you don't look very discouraged.'

'Discouraged?' the boy asked with a puzzled look on his face. 'Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet.'

Whenever I'm disappointed with my spot in life, I stop and think about little Jamie Scott.

Jamie was trying out for a part in the school play. His mother told me that he'd set his heart on being in it, though she feared he would not be chosen..

On the day the parts were awarded, I went with her to collect him after school. Jamie rushed up to her, eyes shining with pride and excitement. 'Guess what, Mom, ' he shouted, and then said those words that will remain a lesson to me - 'I've been chosen to clap and cheer.'

An eye witness account from New York City on a cold day in December some years ago:

A little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold.

A lady approached the young boy and said, 'My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!' 'I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes, 'was the boy's reply.

The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her.

She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased a pair of shoes for him.

She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, 'No doubt, you will be more comfortable now.'

As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her.

'Are you God's wife?'

Kids Korner

1. How many were at the Last Supper with Jesus?

2. How long is a Millennium?

3. Which Old Testament book tells about the life of Abraham?

4. What people wanted to know the secret of Sampson's strength?

5. Who was the only female Judge of Israel?

6. The Lord said that he was the Alpha and the Omega. What does Omega mean?

7. Who was Joseph's mother?

8. Who was the first King of Israel?

9. What was Belteshazzar's other name?

10. Who was the cousin of Mordecai?

11. Who wrote a riddle about a lion?

12. Who called down fire from heaven?

Look it up

1. Matthew 26:19-20

2. Revelation 20:4,6-7

3. Try to find it

4. Judges 16:4-5

5. Judges 4:4-14

6. Revelation 22:13

7. Genesis 30:22-24

8. I Samuel 10:21-25

9. Daniel 1:7

10. Esther 2:15-17

11. Judges 14:16-18

12. II Kings 1:10

From Kid's Bible Q&A, published by
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Note: If you are between the ages of 7 and 12, Sign your name and put your answers in my Mailbox (Gabrielse) by March 14. If you have Answered them all correctly without the help of Your mom or dad, watch for your name in next Month's Cross Connections.

Running Totals

William Fan 24

Martin Vanderschoot 24

Once again, we have a contest for a \$25 gift certificate to be awarded in the January 2011 Issue. Don't miss any issue.
