

# WHEATON

## CROSS † CONNECTIONS

### But Then This ...

**By Pastor John Schuurman**

It happens probably more times than we realize it but God tests us. Like he tested Abraham and Moses and David and countless others and even his own Son, it is clear that he wants to give us the opportunity to prove our faithfulness.

In his grace, God allows crises and struggles to come that stretch and refine our lives with him. Psalm 66, the Psalm we used as our theme throughout Mission Emphasis Week says, "Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver." (Ps 66:8-10)

There have been times when struggling with a situation or a relationship when right in the middle of it, my head popped out of the whirl for a moment and I asked, "is God testing me here?" Or sometimes it has been said this way, "What am I supposed to learn out of this?" I am sure that has happened to you as well.

I found myself asking those questions several months ago in the middle of a situation that had "hard grace" and "tough growth" written all over it. While the particular situation and the story of it now seem silly, (and not of interest in this discussion), the thing that endures in my mind is the **process** of it. It is a process as old as the scriptures: a presentation of a problem (a test), then a struggle with it (often a long or fierce struggle), and then a realization that a meaningful solution can only come through

trust and faith and faithful action, and then a resolution or at least a hope of one.

That process, (test, struggle, faith, and hope—and each step shot through and through with prayer), is told and retold throughout biblical history. If you take any Bible story of God bringing his people along on the next step of the journey to him and the fullness of his promises, those elements are the hinges on which the story turns. God by his Holy Spirit and Word brings us along The Way in that way.

I write this because, like the saints of old, we go through tests. God continues to take us through them. If you are going through such a thing, whether it be fierce or silly, know that God's people have always gone through such processes and so it will continue until he says, "it is enough," and returns.

The longer that I read the Bible and seek to submit myself to God's mysterious plans, I find myself seeing our contemporary problems and challenges in such a way. It might be a traffic jam, or it might be a deadly disease; it might be a terribly deflating visit with the boss in her office or it might be a child who is repeatedly defying authority; it might be bad news from Afghanistan or from your political action committee of choice.

Whatever it is, God allows the brokenness of this world to touch us because he wants us to struggle and to do it in faith and prayer and trust and to finally find rest in the hope of his coming kingdom. Maybe it is a sign of grace and growth in the Lord to see it that way. I hope so.

# Highlights

## 8/24 Council Meeting And 10/12 Elders Meeting

### By Dave Sikkenga, Clerk

#### Ministry Shares Payment

The Council took a step of faith by deciding to pay 1.25 times the normal 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Ministry Share to try to make up for reduced payments made during the first half of the year (due to General Fund limitations). While the General Fund receipts were still behind budget, it was felt that local funds on hand were sufficient to support the make up payment to the important Ministry Shares that support a variety of denominational causes. So through 3 quarters, we have now paid \$57,319 out of the budgeted \$68,784, or 83.3%. In order to pay the full annual amount, we will need to pay 1.5 times the normal quarterly Ministry Share in December, which will mean a payment of \$34,393. This will only be possible if 4th quarter giving sufficiently exceeds spending.

#### Start of New Building Fund Drive

July 31 became the date for the official start of the new Building Fund Drive that will continue for the next 3 years for debt reduction on our facilities. The proceeds from the building reduction pledges will go into this fund. In addition, the council discussed and re-affirmed a previous council decision that donors could designate contributions for new building projects provided that 1) the donors indicated that the gifts were given in addition to, and not as a substitute for, donations to the General Fund, 2) that these new project were part of the desired future projects of the business board, and 3) that the new projects would not be initiated until adequate funding was received. High priority new projects include parking lot improvements and repairing church building soffits.

#### Shepherding Board Establishes Ad Hoc Communication Improvement Committee

A new committee has been formed, under the direction of the Shepherding Board, to foster improved communication within our church. The proposal by the committee (Steve Vogel, Chairperson) includes the following tasks:

1. Review and assess current and foreseeable communication needs, and the methods and technologies available to address those needs.
2. Make recommendations for the most affordable and effective procedures, mechanisms or technologies; oversee the implementation of these improvements.
3. Provide cost estimates and recommend implementation priorities to Council (through the Shepherding Board) for approval or for inclusion in the budget.
4. Coordinate with the Business Board on systems, as necessary.
5. Make recommendations for future staff skills and abilities, to use or implement these communication activities, as we have talked about staff transitions over the next few years.

#### Membership Update

Every October current church membership numbers are reviewed by the clerk and discussed, as needed, by the council. These values are sent to the denomination headquarters to be placed in the CRC Yearbook and used to calculate ministry shares for the following year. The number used to determine ministry shares is based on total professing members minus those under age 19 and those designed by the elders/council as "inactive". For 2009, the number of active members decreased mainly due to a number of our dear families that have moved out of the area over the past 6 months.

Year	Members that Have Made Profession of Faith			
	Active	Under age 19	Inactive	Count For Ministry Shares
2008	291	8	62	221
2009	280	6	68	206

### **Sunday Evening Worship Service Time Change to 5:00pm – Two Month Trial**

At the request of the youth leaders, the council conducted a poll of the evening service attendees and decided to try a change to 5:00 pm for the evening worship time. This would allow youth meeting activities to be completed at an earlier time. In addition several small groups would have additional time for their Sunday evening activities. The trial period for this earlier worship time would be for the months of September (starting Sept 13) and October. A council decision, based on input from those impacted by the change would be made at the end of October.

### **Elders Initiate Planning Process for Pastoral Transition**

At a special elders meeting in March of this year, Pastor John announced that he planned to retire after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2011. To gather additional information on the pastoral transition process, Pastor John and Elder Sikkenga attended a “Leadership Transition Forum” at Trinity Christian College on October 8 for CR churches facing pastoral changes. A resource book, “*Elephant in the Board Room*” by Weese/Crabtree, 2004) was reviewed and discussed at the forum. The results of this forum were discussed at the WCRC Elders meeting on October 12. The WCRC Elders agreed to start establishing a “strategic plan” for this transition process and committed to schedule regular meetings focusing on this issue. Resources from the denomination and classis are being contacted. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2.

# Small Groups Bridging the Gap

**By Shari Buma**

It is all about community. We start by eating together. Following the Biblical tradition that almost anything worth doing is better if it includes food, we meet in each others' homes and rotate the roles of host and guest. It is not a gourmet club. The point is not to impress, but to enfold. This small group could also be called Hospitality 101.

This year we are studying articles from the magazine Christianity Today. Over the years, we have had some intense discussions. Individuals' views and understanding of God are often formed in part by personal life experiences. Our best discussions are when people with very different experiences explain how they see God in a situation and together struggle to understand what it means to be a Christian or how to apply a verse.

***Prayer is another essential element of our small group. Every person tells a little of what is going on in his or her life: the joyful news as well as the hard things. It takes trust to share what really matters with the rest of the group. We have prayed over some very difficult issues, some of which have had amazing answers. We also celebrate many blessings***

# WCRC Family

**By John, Donna and Nell Hoekstra**

Very slowly but surely we are settling into what we will call home. All of us have had pangs of loneliness missing our friends and neighbors. We have tried 3 churches now, and none of them seem to be the answer, but we pray for guidance and patience. You folks have something precious in your church family – nurture it and enjoy it to the fullest!

Our last day at Wheaton CRC was overwhelming with the outpouring of love and caring shown by you. We miss you and will keep praying for you. Today we received a letter from Ed Gabrielse inviting us to share our thoughts.

We also received a very uplifting letter from our son. He wrote about his determination and hope for the future – how he will make it this time no matter where he is. Please continue to pray earnestly for John T; God is at work in him like never before. Thank you so much for your prayers, support, and love.

One of our most treasured experiences was our small group. It took us awhile to “open up” but once we did we felt like part of a family. As small groups are starting we would urge any of you that are wondering if you should join to join! You will be happy you did.

***Nell, is enjoying her new space and having people around her seems to have given her a lift. We enjoy the grandchildren very much.***

## *Missions:*

### *The Loss of a Second House*

**By Ena Vander Molen With  
comments by Grace Huitsing**

*In December, 2007, in the heavy rains at the Wycliffe base at Nasuli, Ena's little retreat house was destroyed and she was carried down the stream until she clung to a tree and rescuers swam to her. Later, she wrote, with gratitude, of the little house she bought at the center for rest and time with fellow Wycliffe people. In Ena's most recent letter, her last paragraph asked for Prayer for her personal need*

On a personal note, you may recall that in Newsletter #75 (entitled “Tailor made”), I wrote of my house in Nasuli and included a link of pictures. The Nasuli Center will officially be closing December, 2009, (unofficially, April 2010) due to there being fewer on-going language projects to justify the expense of keeping it open. Hence, it looks like I will lose the house. I covet your prayers that I can find a place to unwind when I need some “down time” away from village living.

#### **Communication through the Translated Word**

The Revision Committee (RC) was going through the dialogue for the “Jesus” video script. Although based on Luke, the script uses a bit of “creative license” for the flow of the story line. In the scene depicted in Luke 8:32-33, the pig herders watch in horror as their boss' investment is about to take (quite literally) a nose dive. In vain they try to call them back, “Come back!”

So the Obo Manobo translator dutifully

translated that as, “Livod kow! (Come back!)” The only problem is that any self-respecting Manobo who has a pig would never call to his pig like that. If he wants his wayward pig to return, he shouts, “Diik!” The closest English equivalent is “Soeee!” And the pig understands and typically obeys (except in the case depicted in the “Jesus” video). We all had a good chuckle as to how cultures vary in calling to their animals.

Lord willing, the “Jesus” video will be dubbed November 16-28—with the pig herders calling the pigs back in a culturally appropriate way! The RC also went through follow-up questions for 2nd Corinthians. I’m happy to report that that book is now officially consultant checked!

We also revisited the book of Acts to address Vera’s helpful check of that book. To date, the RC has gone through John, Acts, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Revelation, and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Matthew.

### **Communication through Song.**

A word to the wise: If you come to the Philippines between June to October, bring your umbrella. July 26 to August 1st was one of the wettest weeks with torrential downpours.

That was also the week that Geoff and Erica Logan (Geoff of YWAM) and Erica (Heart Sounds Intl.) taught a Song-writing Workshop to about 20 Obo Manobo musicians. Topics included steps in song-writing, music and meaning, arranging and copyright issues. Joel Groening assisted in recording newly composed songs and gave other computer help.

Besides the heavy rainfall, there is a more important reason why it should go down in history and perhaps even in the Guinness Book of World Records.

August 1st marked the first ever Obo Manobo Concert! Erica wrote, “...judging by the screaming fans... of about 200 Manobos who were gathered totally impervious to the rain, Pastor Calihanan singing his composition ‘I Am not from Here’ was the highlight. The modern ensemble was infused with the local sound resulting in spontaneous (traditional) dance.”

The workshop has infused Obo Manobo

musicians with excitement to write more songs in the vernacular. And the listeners are as happy as clams, or rather, ducks after a torrential rainfall.

### **Communication through Radio**

An immediate avenue for disseminating newly composed songs has been the radio program “Moppiyon Dinoggan”, or Good News. (This began after the gift of audio equipment led to setting up a little studio in the kindergarten building.) It began the first Saturday evening in July. It consists of a 15 minute message by Pastor Ronie sandwiched between vernacular music.

In a word (or two), the radio program is a BIG HIT. Listeners love the messages and the music, praising its professional quality. A father and son both wanted to listen to their own radio station; the son wanted FM pop tunes, the father wanted to hear Moppiyon Dinnogan. He told his son, “You can always listen to pop tunes. Moppiyon Dinnogan is only on for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour on Saturday evening; besides, it’s my radio.”

The program has attracted a wider audience than anticipated, including Ilonggos, Tagabawas, and Matigsalugs. An older couple from a “Church of Christ” mission were sitting by their radio soaking up every word. When Pastor came to the end of his message about Christian growth, followed by a Manobo song composed during the workshop, the couple broke down in tears, saying, “So that is how it is.”

As Ena’s church family, let’s give praise for the good things happening with the Obo Manobo people and pray earnestly for a new “down time” house for Ena.

# Insights and Encounters

**By Bob Gerritsen**

We have been suffering losses in two areas of our life over the last several months. We have been losing my mother to Alzheimer's slowly but steadily over the last few years and especially over the last few months. But at the same time I've realized that we have been losing our infant grandson, Ryan, slowly and steadily to the normal processes of growing up.

In my mother's progression she began to struggle to find words to express herself. She also had to make adjustments as her mobility level changed.

Interestingly, Ryan has also progressed to a stage where he struggles to express himself with the correct words. His mobility capabilities have also changed drastically over the past year or so.

As I have been observing these changes, I read the book of Ecclesiastes during my devotions. Of course this book speaks of the futility of so many pursuits in this life. Maybe it wasn't stated explicitly, but it's pretty obvious that it is futile to try to hang on to life as it exists at any given point in time. Things will progress whether we like it or not. But as Ecclesiastes says, we are blest if we can enjoy the things that we have at any given time.

But there is one other thing that my mother and Ryan shared in common. As a little guy, Ryan has the hope of a good and fulfilling life ahead of him. My mother also had the same hope – a hope that has now become a blessed reality.

As a footnote, my mother's funeral brought about an interesting encounter. Mike DeJong came to the funeral home during the visitation. I saw him enter the room as I glanced over the

shoulder of the person I was talking to. But I thought to myself, "No, that can't be him way over here in Grand Rapids. It must be someone who looks much alike." I figured that my thoughts were confirmed when he went over and greeted my brother. Then, my brother introduced him to me as his new boss at Bissell.

And sure enough it was Mike.

**By Emily Dykstra**

My daughter Morgan is five.

To the average person, Morgan may seem like a very short thirteen year old.

Somewhere in the past year, Morgan's mannerisms and body have changed. Her plump baby fingers have become longer. She tells stories and moves her hands to add drama. She furrows her brow and uses the most adjectives she has at hand. She's very in touch with her feelings.

After a somewhat interesting afternoon with my pre-pre-teen (that's no typo) I told Morgan that I had something to show her.

I took her hand in mine and went out to the garden we planted. To the peas, specifically. About a week ago, I filled Morgan's palm with pea seeds. For those unfamiliar, they look just like shriveled peas but lack the luster of fresh ones. They're easy to pick up individually... perfect for little fingers.

I used my index finger to poke one inch holes in the soil and asked my fellow garden gal to put the seeds in them. Then we re-covered them with soil.

As I brought Morgan to the garden today, I showed her how the peas were now growing. I was thrilled. Seizing the Mommy-teaching-moment, I told Morgan this story:

"Morgan, see how the peas are growing? Well, the peas are like you. When I teach you new things about how to grow or make friends or be kind, it's like I'm putting a little seed in the ground. I don't know if what I'm telling you will

ever grow into something more, but boy am I excited when it does."

I used my momentum to drive my point home.

"I am so proud of you, Morgan. You are growing into such a young lady. I'm so proud of the way you're learning to get along with friends and taking care of your sister. So proud."

I gave her a heart felt, Momma-couldn't-be-prouder smile. Yes, the dorky kind.

"Mom?" my sweet daughter asked.

"Yes, Morgan?"

"Can I play with Emily?"

Thud.

I released the hold of my teaching moment.

Smiling, I gently covered the seed with the soil again. Not yet, but maybe soon.

### **By Ed Gabrielse**

Since retirement, Jane and I regularly go on outings – frequently just one day, every few weeks for two or three days and every few months for a week or two. Many of the two or three day outings are camping with our Grand kids, with or without their parents. Some of the longer trips are to see our girls, one in Anacortes, Washington and the other in Sarasota, Florida.

We really enjoy traveling together since we got the GPS. Jane, as an ardent knitter, is always at work. And we just enjoy sharing "Our Father's World." Sometimes an hour or two will pass without a word. We are both comfortable in each other's company without having to fill every minute of silence with verbiage of dubious value. On other occasions, especially as we top a hill and encounter a vista of grand proportions we both draw a breath and exclaim, "How Great Thou Art."

Last week, we drove perhaps the most scenic route within 200 miles and hope you don't mind if we share it with you. (Usually we tell the GPS

to avoid freeways, but in this case you may want to use the freeways to get past the less attractive part of the trip a little faster.)

The trip begins by taking I90 toward Rockford, then up toward Madison and getting off on Highway 33, just before you get to Wisconsin Dells. Turning West, will bring you through the spectacular Baraboo Hills to Baraboo, Wisconsin. From there go West to Country Road PF. Take it South to Blackhawk, then East to Hwy 60. Take Hwy 60 West to Prairie du Chien. Once you leave the Interstate, these roads offer a series of bluffs and valleys, filled at this time of the year with blazing color. At Prairie du Chien you can cross the Mississippi to McGregor, Iowa. Then head South on X56, part of the Great River Road. After it joins Hwy 52, be sure to visit the waterfront at Guttenberg.

Perhaps 5 or 6 miles South of Guttenberg, there is an obscure road called C9Y. The sign says to North Buena Vista. It says nothing about Balltown, just a few miles further. On this road you travel along the ridge of a series of bluffs – on one side of the car is the great Mississippi Valley and on the other side, a unobstructed view of hundreds of miles of rolling farmland. In Balltown there is a restaurant (Breitbachs) that has just reopened after the second fire in as many years. It is Iowa's oldest restaurant and any time after 5:00, plan to wait for seating. After Balltown (and Sherrill), the road rejoins Hwy 52 and enters Dubuque. Wander through Dubuque until you hit Hwy 20 and the bridge across the river into Illinois. Stay on Hwy 20 through the bluffs around Galena, Elizabeth and Stockton. Then swing around Freeport and Rockford and merge onto I90 for a smooth ride home.

This is a trip that you can make in a single day, but if you have a bit more time, consider going to Milwaukee on I94 for apple pancakes or beef sauerbraten at Karl Ratzsch's on Mason Avenue. Take I94 West and stop at Holy Hill and climb the steeple for a spectacular view. Visit the Circus Museum in Baraboo and marvel at what has been preserved. Drive through Devil's Lake State Park or take a train ride at the Railway Museum in North Freedom. A short detour will take you to the Mustard Museum in Mt. Horeb or the House on the Rock – a must see if you have never been there. Another short

detour and you are in Decorah, IA. A night at the beautifully restored Hotel Winnishiek will restore your spirits. At Guttenberg, stop at The Buzz for a cup of coffee and watch the barges negotiate the locks. Breitbacks in Balltown has spectacular views and is a great place for lunch or dinner. Dubuque has some wonderful bed and breakfast opportunities. And Galena is not only a shopping mecca, but the exploration of the back roads and alleys as you go up the hill behind the town is guaranteed to give your passengers the thrill ride of a lifetime.

All of this natural beauty and wonderful activities are within 200 miles or so. It is not Yellowstone or Glacier national parks or even the White Mountains or the Smoky Mountains in size or scope, but it is right here, and right now it is exploding in vibrant, majestic color.

Our exclamations of joy and wonder at the greatness of our Lord are no less as we round each curve and top each hill right here in the corner of Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois.

Just think, it is our loving Father who made and manages it all. And he put it there for us.

## A Holiday Outing

# From Hell to Heaven

**By Vern Geurkink**

***“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, “Thy will be done, ‘and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.”***

Can you imagine a sharper division than the one described in the above quote from The Great Divorce, by C. S. Lewis? (p.72) “Blake wrote the Marriage of Heaven and Hell....I have

written of their Divorce.” (Preface, p.5) Lewis will use a variety of vivid vignettes to picture this clear-cut separation (divorce?) between the two kinds of people.

The story begins in Hell. If we expect fire and smoke and writhing agonies, we are surprised by a “grey town” darkened by drizzle, a drab urban wasteland of “dingy lodging houses,... windowless warehouses and stations without trains.” All the occupants tend to hate their neighbors so they keep moving farther from each other until they end up astronomical distances apart. No wonder the narrator (Lewis?) joins the queue at the bus stop, even though he has no idea that the bus is booked for an excursion to Heaven. While “the Driver himself seemed full of light,” the trip is rendered hellish by incessant squabbling, in-your-face quarreling and sundry personal assaults.

Upon landing the passengers push and shove their way out of the bus and step into the grandest panorama of scenic landscape you can imagine, and discover that they are fully transparent. They are Ghosts! And everything else is so solid and real that the blades of grass, instead of bending under their feet, are so painful to walk on that one passenger asks the Driver, “When do we go back?” “You need never come back unless you want to,” he replies. “Stay as long as you please.”

And that welcome is at the heart of the story. These denizens of Hell are offered an opportunity to choose Heaven. Each passenger is met by a bright, solid “Spirit” of someone from his or her earthly life who comes from the heart of Heaven to this outlying “Valley of the Shadow of Light,” all for the loving purpose of urging the “Ghost” to choose Heaven.

The first encounter observed by our narrator occurs when Big Man is approached by one of the solid spirits who shouts, “Don’t you know me?” Big Man is stunned to see Len, the murderer of a co-worker named Jack, in Heaven. Then he learns that Jack is also in Heaven, and sends his love.

“But you murdered him,” says Big Man.

Len replies, “Of course, I did. It is all right now.”

Shocked that a bloody murderer should be in Heaven while he's been "walking the streets down there and living in a place like a pig sty all these years," Big Man begins to demand his rights. He pleads his case on the merits of what he calls "the sort of chap I was" and asks for "nothing but my own rights."

Len the murderer replies, "I haven't got my rights, or I should not be here. You'll not get yours either. You'll get something far better. Never fear."

"I'm not asking for anybody's Bleeding Charity."

"Then do. At once. Ask for the Bleeding Charity. Everything is here for the asking." Len goes on to explain: "Murdering old Jack was not the worst thing I did. That was a work of a moment when I was half mad. But I murdered you in my heart, deliberately, for years. I ask your forgiveness."

After all of Len's efforts to offer the love and joy of Heaven, Big Man turns away saying, "I'd rather be damned than go along with you," and heads back to the bus.

Many such dramas make up the heart of this fictional portrayal of encounters on the doorstep of eternal joy. Each visitor from Hell is offered loving encouragement to let go of the one vice that comes between them and the experience of joy. In every case but one, they choose to cling to the precious selves that they are, even if it means returning to Hell.

An apostate Bishop gives up Heaven rather than give up "the atmosphere of free inquiry" and "of honest opinions freely expressed" which they enjoy in their "little Theological Society" back in Hell where only the questions matter.

A famous artist can not accept a world in which no one is more famous than anyone else.

A mother who mourned her lost son for 10 years, to the neglect of her grieving husband and daughter, refuses Heaven unless her demand to see her son is complied with immediately. "I want my boy. He is mine, mine, mine, for ever and ever."

An utterly domineering wife who browbeat her husband with a "total makeover" to the point of a nervous breakdown, agrees to enter Heaven only if he is released to her so she can "take charge of him again."

The only exception is a Ghost who had lived a life dominated by lust, which is represented by a little red lizard that sits on his shoulder and continues to whisper sordid temptations into his ear, even when he is no longer able to act on them. A dazzling angel approaches and asks, "Would you like me to make him quiet?" A tense dialogue makes it clear that "making the lizard quiet" means killing him, and that the angel cannot kill it against the man's will. After being asked eight times by the angel for permission to kill it, the lecher curses and finally agrees, and the lizard is killed. The dying agent of lust shudders in the throes of death and in its place emerges a beautiful white stallion that is a pure, burning desire for God and his kingdom!

A murderer and a lecher who repent revel in the joys of Heaven, while a bishop, an artist, a grieving mother, a doting wife and others refuse to say "Thy will be done," rejecting the transforming grace that bombards them with Love's urgent invitation.

## Theo's View

*Editors Note: This is the third in a series of insights on our spiritual journey that Theo left us.*



*How Long is Everlasting?*

# Getting to Know...

**By Larry Kendrick**

## **Names, maiden name), and any children:**

Stephanie Steenbergen,  
Pieter Disselkoen,  
Annelise and Kai Disselkoen

## **Where we were each born and raised, and about our families:**

Piet was born in Traverse City Michigan, but moved around growing up. Grand Rapids, MI (3yrs old), Walnut Creek, CA (6), Denver, CO (11), Seal Beach, CA (14), San Mateo, CA (18)

Piet's extended family is from the Zeeland/Holland area. I have 2 older sisters, one still in CA, and one in Glenwood IL. My parents live in Homewood, IL – close to my sister and her kids.

Steph was born in Kalamazoo, MI, and move to Grand Rapids when she was 13.

Steph's dad died when she was 11. Her mom remarried when she was 13. Steph has one brother.

## **Places we've lived:**

San Mateo, CA; Barrington, IL; Palatine, IL; Glen Ellyn, IL and now Aurora

## **How we met:**

In religion 201 class our junior year at Calvin. It took a while, but I (Piet) finally asked her out the last week of class.

## **When and where we were married:**

In Michigan at Knollcrest CRC on Calvin's campus (Steph's parents church)

## **Occupations:**

Piet – National Account Manager for OfficeMax  
Steph – Homemaker

## **Schools we attended:**

Calvin

## **Hobbies:**

Piet – Woodworking, biking, fly fishing, home improvement, general domestic arts depending on the season!

Steph – Sewing, reading, resale shopping, cooking/baking

## **Favorite TV show:**

Iron Chef America or HGTV

## **Favorite movie:**

Kids have really impacted our movie consumption. (read: we don't have time) Steph loves movies

Piet would throw out a mixed medley of Tender Mercies, Unforgiven, Caddyshack, and CARS (out of respect to Annelise)

## **Favorite book:**

Piet – tough to pick a favorite. I could get some top choices out. From Wallace Stegner – Crossing to Safety and Big Rock Candy Mountain. From Ivan Doig – English Creek and Dancing at the Rascal Fair. Wendell Barry – The Memory of Old Jack, Fidelity

Steph – too many favs.

## **Favorite "pig-out" food:**

Piet – I love most foods from the lovely pig

Steph – dark chocolate and plain yogurt drizzled with honey

## **Favorite vacation:**

We traveled to Germany together pre kids. That was very fun. Now we go to Lake Michigan for two weeks every summer. One week with the Disselkoen grandparents and one week with the Pastoor grandparents.

## **Favorite Bible verse:**

Piet – favorite book is Ephesians, although Romans is very interesting to me right now – specifically Romans 7

Steph – Psalm 91 and Romans 8

## **How long we've been attending WCRC:**

A decade! Can you believe it?!? This is our second "getting to know you."

**Favorite thing about WCRC:**

We love the welcoming atmosphere. No frozen chosen here! Harold Vanderveen welcomed us heartily. We try to welcome newcomers in honor of him.

**Additional things people may not know about us:**

Piet graduated from small engine repair school because his folks didn't have much hope for his academic future. He went to Calvin and sailed through beautifully receiving As and an occasional B.

Steph graduated from Calvin with a German and English major. She can converse competently with your average 3 year old German child, but speaking with adult Germans, forget it!

# The Pastor Who Has Obama's Attention

## Chaplain Survived a Tumor and War to Preach at Camp David

**From: Paul K. Willard**  
**To: Ray H. Smith**

**From: Ray H. Smith**  
**To: Chuck Schoenherr**

**By Jacqueline L. Salmon**  
**Washington Post Staff Writer**  
**Wednesday, October 14, 2009**

The Rev. Jeremiah Wright is long gone; Rick Warren, just an Inauguration Day memory. The hordes of ministers around town who were hoping they'd somehow wind up with the first family in their pews have (mostly) given up.

The president has been pastorless for quite a while now. Well, sort of.

Seventy miles from Washington's prying eyes, Barack Obama has been attending church from time to time at Camp David, where services are led by a 39-year-old Navy chaplain with a famous last name, a compelling life story and a fervent belief in a God who works miracles.

Carey Cash, the great-nephew of singer Johnny Cash and the younger brother of a former Miss America, sees the hand of God in every part of his journey: from the football fields where he once aspired to the NFL to the medical facilities where he learned he'd never play again; from the battered Humvee where he came under fire on the streets of Baghdad to the tiny chapel where he preaches to the country's commander in chief in the Western Maryland mountains.

Although Cash was assigned to Camp David by the Navy, the president really likes the guy. Cash, Obama told religion reporters this summer, "delivers as powerful a sermon as I've heard in a while. I really think he's excellent."

But don't make the mistake of referring to the imposing 6-foot-4 Southern Baptist chaplain as the president's pastor. The White House has said that's not the case.

None of the president's advisers have forgotten the firestorm that engulfed Obama during the campaign when inflammatory sermons by Wright, Obama's longtime spiritual mentor at Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, were made public.

The president himself cites it as part of the reason that he and his wife have been hesitant to pick a permanent church in Washington.

"Let's be blunt," said Obama, who has attended worship services once at Nineteenth Street Baptist Church and three times at St. John's Episcopal Church, most recently Sunday. "We were pretty affected by what happened at Trinity and the controversy surrounding Reverend Wright. That was deeply disturbing to us, and it was disappointing for us personally. It made us very sensitive to the fact that as president, the church we attend can end up being interpreted as speaking for us at all times."

At Camp David's tiny Evergreen Chapel, which is off limits to the public and the media, the Obamas don't have to worry about that kind of scrutiny. The family shares the pews with a small number of military families stationed at the 143-acre retreat -- an experience that the president has mentioned more than once, along with his high regard for Cash.

But that doesn't mean Obama endorses Cash's controversial views on Christian proselytizing in the military and on Islam, which the chaplain describes in a 2004 book as a violent faith that "from its very birth has used the edge of the sword as a means to convert or conquer those with different religious convictions."

The White House declined to make Cash available for interviews, saying it wished to keep the president's religious worship at Camp David private. Cash's family also declined to speak on instructions, they said, from the White House.

Nevertheless, interviews with others close to him and Cash's account of his 2003 deployment to Iraq paint a portrait of a gripping preacher who baptized more than 50 men during the war and who believes a "wall of angels" shielded his troops as they battled their way to Baghdad in the opening days of the war.

Two men died and dozens were injured, but, in Cash's view, God protected the unit from more extensive casualties.

"Yes, our men were lost and separated," Cash recounts in "A Table in the Presence: The Dramatic Account of How a U.S. Marine Battalion Experienced God's Presence Amidst the Chaos of the War in Iraq." "But our God was not confused. Just as he had from the very beginning of the war, He was providentially working all things together for the good of a cause that was just and true."

The book also offers an unflattering assessment of Islam, which Cash views as a flawed faith.

"Sadly, grace is often absent in Islam, which is based upon binding religious law, requiring strenuous adherence to every tenet of the 'Five Pillars of Allah,' " Cash writes. "A religion that emerges from the soil of strict adherence to law

as a means of gaining God's favor will always tend toward extreme self-sacrifice."

Cash has drawn criticism from the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a watchdog group that monitors Christian proselytizing in the military, for his participation in Campus Crusade for Christ's Military Ministry, a program for evangelical chaplains to "help every troop, every leader, every family member hear and receive the lifesaving message about Jesus."

"This is an organization that has repeatedly stated its goal of transforming our military into a force of 'government-paid missionaries for Christ,' " said Chris Rodda, a foundation spokesman. "Any chaplain or commander who would support or condone these tactics or goals is a problem."

The White House declined to comment on the criticism. But those who served with Cash in Iraq have nothing but praise for his deep faith, warm manner and forceful sermons.

"I have absolutely no surprise that the president is moved and inspired by or finds that his message is powerful," said Brig. Gen. Frederick Padilla, Cash's commander during his deployment. "You don't have a heart beating in your chest if you don't feel this way when you hear this man talk."

Obama will have plenty of opportunities to hear Cash speak: The lieutenant commander and his wife, Charity, who have six children and a seventh on the way, will be at Camp David for much of Obama's term.

Previous Camp David chaplains said they needed permission from the White House to discuss their experience there, which, despite repeated requests, administration officials did not provide.

But in his 2008 book, "No Atheists in Foxholes," the Rev. Patrick McLaughlin, a Lutheran who served at Camp David during George W. Bush's first term, recalls his nerves at presiding over the pulpit with the president, his family and staff present.

"Are you any good?" he remembers Bush asking him when he was first introduced to the

president.

"Yes, sir," McLaughlin said he replied. "The Navy sent me here. I can hold my own."

During his three-year tenure, from 2002 to 2005, McLaughlin delivered 60 sermons with Bush present, including one after the president declared war on Iraq.

"God," the chaplain remembers praying, "give me the words for Sunday's sermon."

Those who know Cash said they doubt preaching before the president would faze him.

"I don't think he's intimidated by persons of power and prestige," said Rodney Petersen, one of Cash's teachers when he did postgraduate work at the Boston University School of Theology. "I'm sure that he is polite and respectful, but he calls it like it is."

Cash was born in Memphis to an accomplished, deeply religious family. His father, Roy Cash Jr., was a fighter pilot in the Navy for 30 years. His older sister, Kellye, was crowned Miss America in 1987. His mother, Billie, runs a Christian ministry and is the author of several books about her faith.

Billie was the central figure in Cash's childhood, because his father was often away on deployments.

His mother's devotion to God, Cash writes, had a profound effect when he was growing up. Each day, he would tear off a calendar Scripture verse upon which his mother had written a message, wad it up in his pocket and carry it with him for inspiration.

After his family moved to Virginia Beach, Cash played football at Bayside High School, where he wrote a poem about God and the gridiron that was printed in the *Virginian-Pilot* newspaper:

*At dusktime,  
I love to hold a battered football,  
in the lonely, overcast stadium  
and talk to God  
of my mistakes.*

Cash went on to play football at the Citadel in South Carolina, where he was a 270-pound NCAA all-American offensive tackle. He drew interest from several NFL teams, his mother writes in one of her books. But after graduating from the Citadel in 1992, he began having blurred vision and headaches.

The diagnosis: an inoperable brain tumor. Doctors told Cash it wasn't cancerous, but it was located in a dangerous place on the brain stem. If it grew, it could threaten his life. Football was out of the question.

"My life may have been as good as over in the eyes of some people," Cash writes. "But something deep inside was calling me to turn my eyes away from the situation and to trust God, who knew exactly what He was doing."

With the encouragement of his father-in-law, a Navy chaplain, Cash entered Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with the goal of becoming a chaplain, too. He served as a youth minister, pastored a small Tennessee church and eventually received a medical waiver to enter the Navy Reserves based on a doctor's assurance that his tumor would not grow.

After much prayer, Cash writes, his headaches and blurred vision went away, which he attributes to God's direct intervention.

In August 2001 -- just a month before terrorists would bring down the World Trade Center -- Cash entered active-duty service and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, part of the first ground force to enter Iraq in 2003.

As the convoy of tanks, trucks and transport vehicles moved through southern Iraq toward Baghdad, Cash and his assistant, Petty Officer Redor Rufo, drove alongside in their Humvee, large white crosses painted on each door.

Cash prayed with sweating Marines inside massive amphibious assault vehicles and conducted brief, informal services, using tailgates and ammunition boxes for altars. He baptized men with canteens of water.

At one point, he writes, he and Rufo were sprayed with bullets as Cash finished up a service in Saddam City. They threw themselves behind the Humvee's front bumper and were unharmed.

"He didn't ever seem scared and nervous like the rest of us," recalled Bill Bonner, a corporal in the battalion. "He was always just there to keep us going. He was a stalwart in the way that he faced the challenge of dealing with combat for the first time."

His three-year tour at Camp David presents a much different challenge: providing spiritual inspiration to the most powerful man in the world. But if Obama's admiring words are any indication, he's getting the job done

*Chuck:*

*This is interesting on two counts. Wheaton alumna Jo (Garrett) Klenk '68 is a niece of the late Johnny Cash and first cousin-once removed of the Cash in this story. Jo's mother and Chaplain Cash's grandfather were siblings.*

*And Paul Willard, who forwarded this, is a son of the late Rev. Wyeth Willard, a highly decorated WW2 Marine combat chaplain who landed with the first wave at Tarawa and Guadalcanal. He was later the administrative assistant to Wheaton's President VR Edman from 1946-52.*

*Ray H. Smith*

*Editors Note:*

*We often pray for our president and the spiritual guidance he is getting. Please take a moment with me to thank God for Pastor Cash and pray that he be given the insights to minister to our president.*

# Thoughts on Change

**By Chuck Schoenherr**

Unless things change, they remain the same. It seems so obvious. But let's look at this simple statement in our daily lives, both individually and corporately.

Let me begin with an example. If you think you are too fat and want to lose some weight, some things have to change. It doesn't just happen. First you have to have the desire to lose the weight. Second, you have to consider the alternatives. You could go on a diet, begin exercising, take some pills or have you stomach stitched up. Nothing is going to happen unless you make a change. This is a universal concept – unless something changes it will remain the same.

Often we avoid change because it can be painful. Change can cause physical pain, emotional pain or spiritual pain (i.e. asking for forgiveness can be painful). And since we are creatures who do all we can to avoid pain, we put off the change as long as possible. Years ago, I had a professor who regularly reminded us that there is nothing quite as painful as the pain of a new idea. New ideas have to be assimilated into our thought patterns and this can be quite painful. Consequently, we often close our minds to new ideas. Even when there is incontrovertible proof, we try to make the acceptance of a new idea as painless as possible.

I do not believe that you can put a universal moral judgment on change. It is neither good or bad in itself. Nor am I suggesting that everything must or will change. Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. Your skin color doesn't change. If things don't change, they will remain the same. But if you want things to be different, something has to change.

And there are ways to stimulate change. One way is to increase the level of perceived dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is the technique

that advertisers use regularly. For example, they make you aware that the new models of automobiles get much better gas mileage than that old clunker. They help us understand how this is accomplished and remind us of the socially responsible need to conserve energy. They show us that we can save money. This message is hammered home again and again using every medium at their disposal. Now, there is no guarantee that when you begin to really hate the car you have that you will take action, but the dissatisfaction is a necessary precondition to drag yourself to the car dealer. It does not guarantee that you will make the change. You may look at the cost and decide it is more than you want to give up. You may simply decide to live with a car you hate because the pain of the dissatisfaction is less than the pain of the change..

That is the condition we see in so much of the world. Perhaps, there is very little dissatisfaction with their style of life and consequently little motivation to make a change. Perhaps there is dissatisfaction, but the pain of the change looms too large to take the next step.

We sing a song that captures both the dissatisfaction and the relief after the change is made:

“What a wonderful change  
in my life has been wrought  
Since Jesus came into my life  
I have light in my soul  
for which long I have sought  
Since Jesus came into my life.”

The need for change applies in the church as well. Martin Luther, John Calvin, Wilberforce and Martin Luther King are great examples of individuals who became dissatisfied with some of the practices of the church and became change agents.

Do you consider yourself a change agent or a resistor of change? There are times when both are needed. It is the wise person who knows when to resist change and when to embrace it.

Old people are often accused of resisting change. I suppose that is true. When we are happy with the way things are, why change? If

your grandfather's telephone doesn't send text messages or take pictures, it means he is likely satisfied with the land line he has used for years. It may be that he does not want to go through the painful process of learning the new technology. That system has served him well so why change?

However, when grandma starts to feel frumpy in the clothes she is wearing, she'll change – just wait and see.

Unhappy about things as they are? Feeling some pain? Make some changes and see what happens.

## Humor Me

### ***One Liners for Stressful Times***

Accept that some days you're the pigeon and some days you're the statute.

Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.

Always wear stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

Drive carefully. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker.

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.

We can learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.

If you lend someone \$20 and never see them again, it was probably worth it.

It may be that your sole purpose in life is to be kind to others.

Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, you won't have a leg to stand on.

When everything is coming your way, you may be in the wrong lane.

You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.

Some mistakes are too much fun to make just once.

Don't let your worries get the best of you, remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

Some people are kind, polite and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pews.

Many folk want to serve God, but only as advisors.

It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one.  
The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but mosquitoes come close.

When you get to your wits end, you will find that God lives there.

People are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road and the back of the church.

Opportunity may knock once, but temptation bangs on your door forever.

Quit griping about your church. If it was perfect, you couldn't belong.

If the church wants a better preacher, it only needs to pray for the one it has.

We were called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.

A lot of church members who are "Standing on the Promises" are really just sitting on the premises.

God does not propose to judge a person until death. So why should you?

Be fishers of men. You catch 'em – He'll clean 'em.

Coincidence is when God chooses to remain anonymous.

Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.

Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Don't put a question mark where God has put a period.

God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called.

If God is your co-pilot, swap seats.

He who angers you controls you.

God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage

God loves everyone, but likely prefers a fruit of the spirit to a religious nut.

# Kids Korner

1. Where was Ruth's homeland?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who was the third son of Adam?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where was Jacob buried?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who said "If anyone is not with me then he is against me?"

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Who was the father of Hosea?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. In the gospel of John, who did Jesus weep for? \_\_\_\_\_

7. When Pharaoh did not let God's people go, what does Exodus 13:15 tell us happened?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. To what did Paul compare the coming of the day of the Lord?

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What happened to Peter when Jesus asked him to walk on the water?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Who was blinded by Jesus on the road to Damascus?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Who did the Lord call by a vision in Damascus?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. What did the angel use to measure the city?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Look it up

1. Ruth 1:1-7

2. Genesis 5:3

3. Genesis 50 :12-14

4. Matthew 12:30

5. Hosea 1:1

6. John 11: 31-35

7. Exodus 13:15

8. 1 Thessalonians 5:2

9. Matthew 14:29-31

10. Acts 4:8

11. Acts 9:10

12. Revelation 21:16

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Note: If you are between the ages of 7 and 12 any time during the calendar year 2009, sign your name and put your answers in my mail box (Gabrielse) by Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Running Totals	
Sarah Dykstra	24
William Fan	83
Kathryn Kmiecik	34
Dakota Nickols	12

Once again, we have a contest for a \$25 gift certificate to be awarded in the January, 2010 issue. Don't miss an issue.